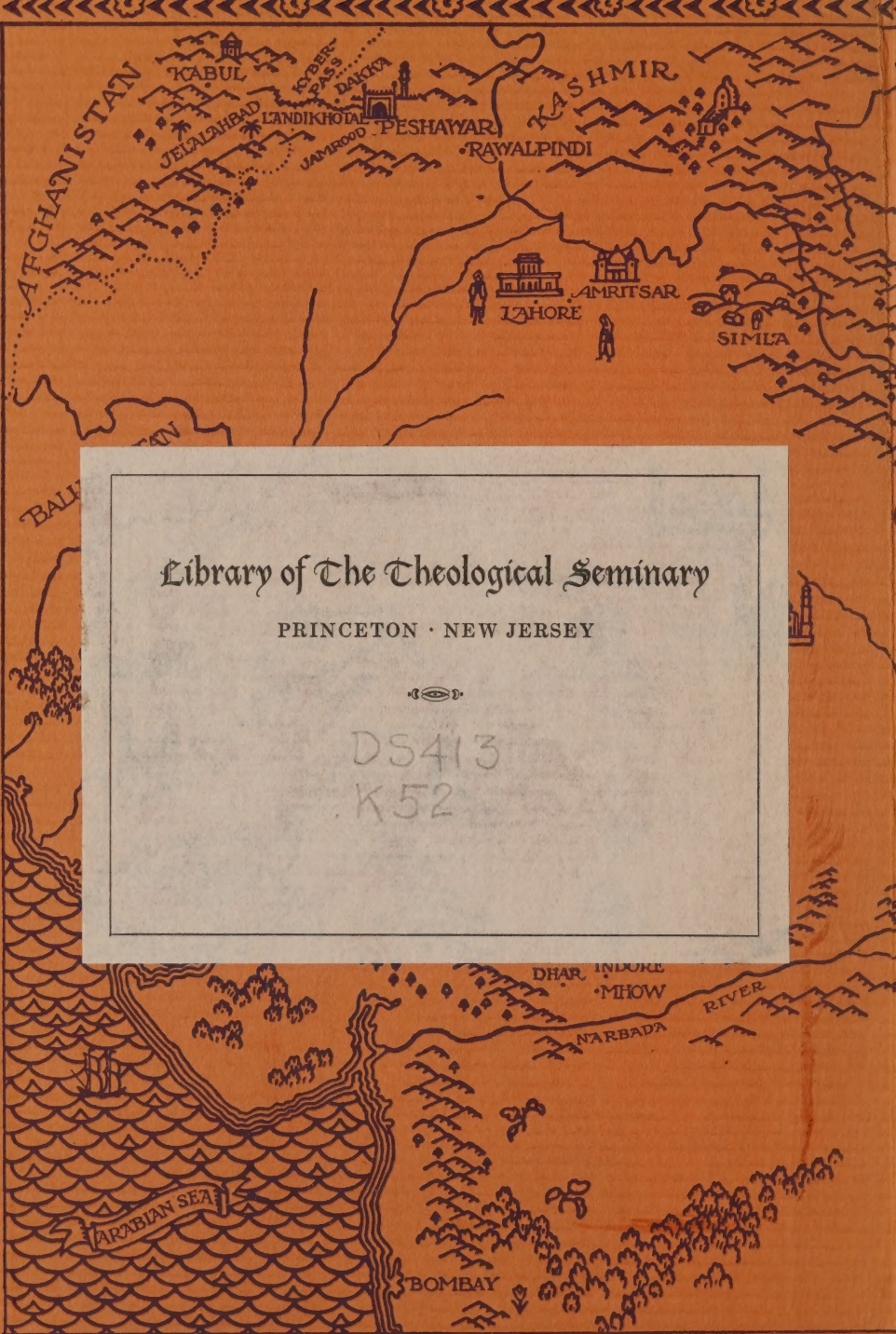

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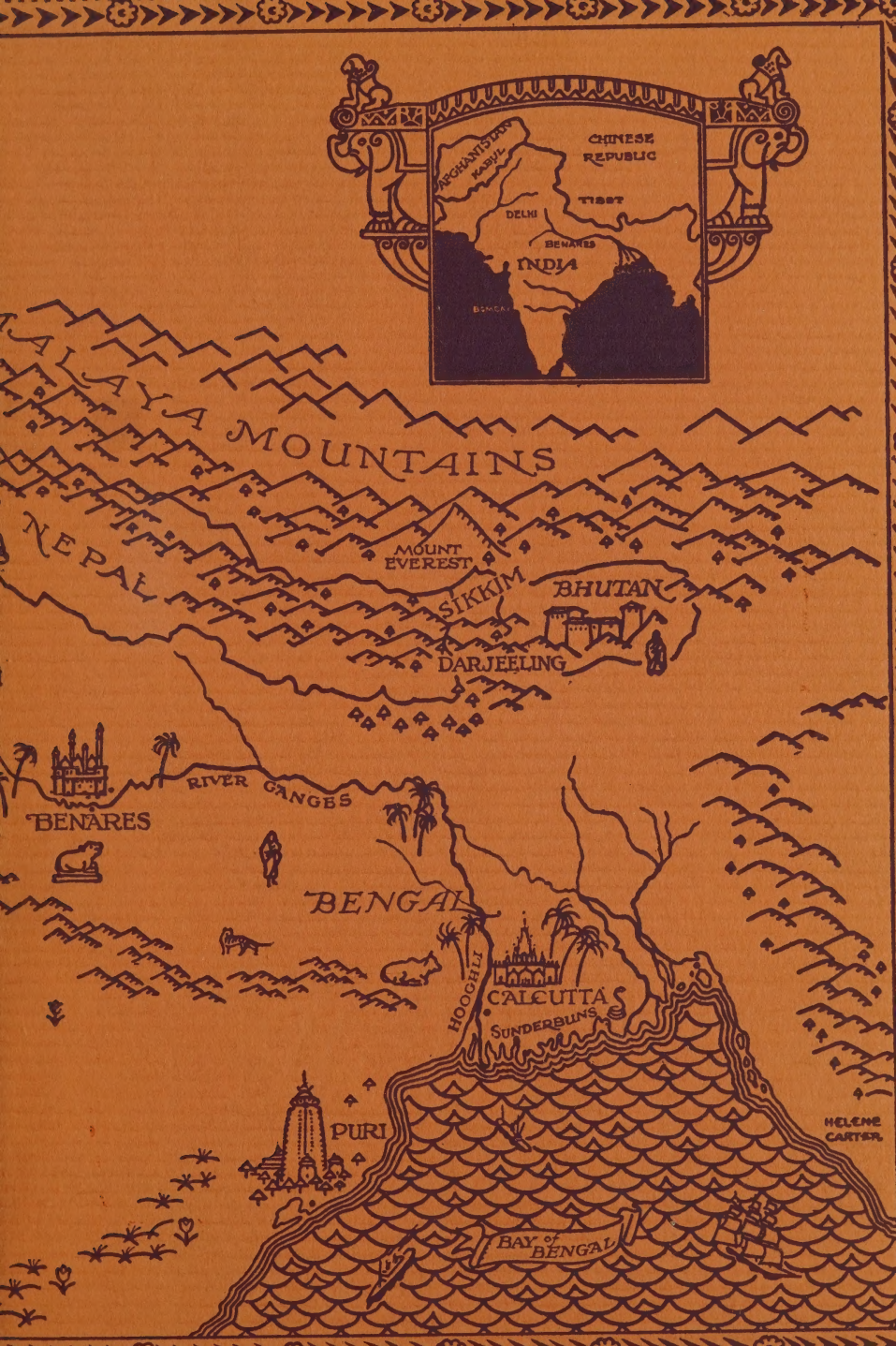
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LIVING EAST

The mysterious Black Pagoda, a night's journey from Puri, and dating back to the dim mists of antiquity

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LIVING EAST

by

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DUFFIELD & COMPANY
NEW YORK - 1929

By the same author:

"L.M.8046," A DIARY OF THE FOREIGN LEGION

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Printed at The Cornwall Press
Cornwall, New York

This book is respectfully dedicated to

Victor H. McCutcheon

. . . now let Thy servant depart
in peace . . .

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Publisher's Note

Afghanistan plays a salient though passive part in world politics, acting as a buffer between British India and the Soviet Power in Turkestan. At the time of Mr. King's visit, Ameer Amanullah, a just and strong king, had been on the throne for nearly ten years. He was well disposed toward the British, but preeminently a progressive nationalist. Since then, a young rebel has usurped control and now rules in Kabul. The situation is however very uncertain, and at the time this book goes to press, Amanullah is reported to have entered Ghazni unopposed and to have made momentous strides in his march from Kandihar to regain the throne.

Book One:
INDIA

Chapter One

GO EAST, YOUNG MAN

"BLOODY PROFITEERS!—Steward, bring me a gin and bitters." I had been about to move to another corner of the smoking room when the croaking voice beside me spoke my inmost thoughts. I turned to look into one of the most hideous faces I had ever seen. Hideous it must always have been, and polo mallets, ponies' hooves and a chance sabre slash had not improved matters.

But in spite of the ferocious scowl I grinned, for the face had all the ingratiating attraction of a prize bull-pup.

A twinkle came into the eye of the stranger and he grinned back, as though to say "Yes, isn't it a beauty!"

Two gin and bitters were ordered.

This kindred spirit proved to be a major of the Deccan Horse. Here was real company for the voyage and my spirits rose, for the passengers I had seen so far had been anything

but inspiring. . . . They had all been Anglo-Indians in the hotel bus and most of them knew each other, and as we rattled over the cobbles of Marseilles on our way to the P. & O. docks I was seized by a panic of loneliness. I dragged out my conversation with the *douanier* to the utmost limit, tenaciously discoursing on topics of no possible interest to either of us. Was he not the last link between me and the life I was leaving? However, I realized it was no use temporizing, and squaring my shoulders I marched sternly towards the ship.

There she lay—black hull and dingy buff funnels and superstructure—looking for all the world like an old-fashioned cruiser. Oh yes, she was a P. & O. boat—something between a warship and a native-owned steamer. The chief steward on duty at the gang-plank, in white tunic and cap, looked as smart as a sergeant of marines. Even the shuffling Lascars, blue-shirted, their waists bound tight by red cotton cummerbunds, (no native ever tucks in his shirt-tail) with their ridiculous red monkey caps, looked snappy and seaman-like.

Not only in appearance did she resemble a warship, for I soon found the attitude of the

The iron pillar at Delhi, believed to have been erected several thousands of years ago

A Yogi, his long hair filled with the sacred cow dung

whole ship's crew towards the passengers was one of barely tolerant indifference—no, even less amiable, a sort of curbed resentment, as though they could not understand why such miserable animals as passengers should be allowed to clutter up their beautiful ship.

Was not the P. & O. the official line to the Orient?

Was not the mail contract theirs and theirs exclusively?

A thousand times unfortunately yes! Then why all this fuss about passengers' comfort?

I was duly impressed and proportionately depressed.

My fellow travellers were hearty but stodgy-looking folk; most of them had boarded the ship at Tilbury Dock and now tramped the decks with an air of prior ownership, glaring at us as if we were so many intruders.

In my state of Coventry I bethought me of one person on board ship who, if not jovial, is generally hospitable, and I headed for the smoking room.

At the table next me three or four Calcutta merchants were discussing business, their leave home, how many cars they had just

bought, and how they had been robbed by the French, and were getting more and more loud-mouthed and impossible as they warmed to their subject.

"Bloody profiteers!" repeated the Major, and we drank together as in response to a toast.

He was returning from leave after five years of war and service thoroughly fed up with post-war London, its prices sky high and every one money-mad, thanks to profiteers such as our neighbors. He rambled on—his hopes and disappointments . . . the changes in the Army . . . and then began to question me.

"First time out?"

"Yes."

"Thought so. Going on business, aren't you?"

"Yes, jute—Calcutta."

"God, I don't envy you. They are a pretty sticky crowd in that town!"

"Oh well—it can't be worse than what I've been through since the war."

My thoughts went back over the last nine months. . . . My duties at the Peace Conference that had kept me in France—it was

months after the Armistice before I got back to America. By then the enthusiasm for returning heroes had died down, and with no business experience jobs were hard to find. I had walked from office to office for interminable weeks and my hopes had dwindled daily —as had my sixty dollar discharge bonus. The more merciful told me outright there was no place for me—those who still cowered under the suspicion of being thought unpatriotic made an empty pretense of taking my name and address—and would let me know.

Help had come from a war friend—a man in a position to dictate . . . lunch at a downtown club with the *Vice-President* of a *Bank*. . . . Over coffee the Banker began.

"Now, let me see, you want a job. What previous business have you had?"

My friend's fist came down on the table.

"Damn it all, Dick, I'm not *asking* you to take this man—I'm offering you first chance at him . . ." and on in like vein for fifteen minutes, and following this barrage I had walked into a job in a big bank.

I entered a class with nine other men picked for training as sub-managers abroad:

first twelve months in a bank in New York, going through every department, and then Hong-Kong — Shanghai — Berlin — or Paris. The future mapped out for us was bright—but the actual experience *Hell*! Picked men means marked men—none of the jealous underlings and few of the department heads were exactly anxious to show us how the wheels went round. Every bit of information had to be dug or wheedled out of a fellow employee by standing him lunch; and the department heads seemed to think that the only thing to do with us favored nincompoops was to chain us to adding machines.

The rattle of these machines reminded me of a distant fusillade on the front, and I got a certain sardonic amusement out of the reversed conditions. Now I was snapped and snarled at by every underling from the cheeky office-boys up. In those other days I had commanded men over the roar of a barrage—Hell —what difference did it make! Here, after all, I was the latest joined raw recruit—besides —what was the use of having had discipline hammered into you if you could not apply it later on!

The training had gone on. . . .

First the receiving-teller's where the real day's work began after the bank closed—feverish hunts in the waste-baskets for lost cheques or credit slips when it came to striking a balance—sometimes it was merely a matter of stray change, still it had to be found or accounted for, though the department would willingly have chipped in to make up the difference and go home.

Heated arguments with Jewish depositors who could scarcely read and write:—

"I deposited a cheque on de secont, but I didn't draw no interest by it till de fort—"

"No, it wasn't a certified cheque. We had to clear it first."

"Vell, it vas a good cheque, ain't it?"

"Oh yes, it was quite all right."

"Den vy don't I get no interrest from de second already?—De Vice-President vill I see—you should fired be, mebbe," etc.

Hurried half-hours for lunch with my brother—refreshing after the chewing-gum chatter in the teller's cage.

A change of department—coupon collection this time. Long desks piled high with little

bundles of coupons fastened neatly with rubber bands. Here again there were bunkers in the fairway. Once an irate depositor claimed credit for coupons he had never sent—yet he was too powerful to offend. The Bank stood the loss and the department took the blame. Next quarter-day in came the missing coupons with a lot of others, but the customer never seemed to think it necessary to apologize or even to explain. A ribald song ran through my mind:

"It's the rich what gets the pleasure,
While the poor takes all the blame . . ."

Then the out of town collection department with its twenty-seven racks, each one presided over by a woman. Twenty-seven possibilities of a mistake in striking a balance. . . . The girls didn't care, they left at five o'clock anyway, and in consequence the men of that department usually worked from eight in the morning till midnight.

Nine months of this, then an offer from a manufacturing company — an independent command in India—a living salary and a chance to see what I could do.

The Vice-President I spoke to was more than fair.

"Speaking as a vice-president of this bank, I think you should stay with us. You are first on the list to go abroad, and we have taken considerable trouble to train you. But at the same time I don't think we are going to see the hoped for increase in the export trade. So, if it's a good job—speaking as a friend—take it!"

I repeated to myself, emphatically:

"No, certaintly not worse!"

. . . . .

The gong went for dinner and we hurried down to dress, for it doesn't do to be late for meals on a P. & O. The Company's motto is "Quis separabit," which means, being interpreted, "Public be damned." If you are late, you miss a course, and although you don't miss much it is often the only thing on the menu worth eating.

Through some unfortunate accident I found myself at the Captain's table. The skipper himself was friendly enough, but the other people, having fought hard for this same privilege,

were somewhat disgruntled to find a young man without the justification of a title at the sacred board. One pompous female, the wife of a cinema magnate in Bombay, spent the first two days, until I declared my nationality, in cursing America and the Americans. She then tried to make amends by starting in on Australians, whereupon an Australian across the table protested and she sulked for the rest of the voyage, only deigning to talk to the Captain and a rather bored-looking Lord.

In the meantime the Major had picked up a long, lean, sun-bronzed man, Tyler, who had spent most of his life engineering in the Sudan. In vain we three tried to get seats at the same table. The laws of the Medes and the Persians were no more rigid than is the final seating list of a P. & O. dining saloon, and meals became furtive gobble and git affairs, to be forgotten over coffee and genial companionship in the smoking room.

PORT SAID

Years before, a young officer in the Indian Army had painted me such a graphic picture

of the cesspool of the scum of nations, that I had determined some day to see Port Said for myself. Fortunately I went ashore with Tyler and the Major, as both these men knew the ropes and had a fluent vocabulary of discouraging Arabic.

I needed a "solar-topee" so off we went to buy one at Simon Artz'. It is the "Marshall-Field" of the East—there you can get anything from a tooth-pick to a Kohinoor diamond. Everyone laughs at the shop, but everyone goes there—for Simon called Artz was the first man to realize that passengers on shore for an hour or so have no time to haggle; therefore prices in his shop are fixed—a good percentage of profit—but fixed. I got a cheap topee of the Cawnpore type. It was a horrible thing—the chin-strap was a fake, and the sweat-band smeared my forehead with a mixture of glue and dye. Never buy a cheap and nasty topee,—you will spend the difference in ointments to cure the resulting sores, and may get a sun-stroke into the bargain.

I was disappointed in Port Said. The military authorities had pushed the native town back from the Port during the war and in

1920 it was still somewhat clear of the usual touts.

One greasy Gyppy, in tarbouch and black alpaca coat, solicitous of our pleasure made enticing offers—but very *sotto voce.*

"Gentlemen,—gentlemen—come with me. . . ."

"Roo!" bellowed the Major.

"Come with me, gentlemen, and see the French whore, *all naked*!!"

I roared with laughter—the Major roared with rage—and Tyler ticked Hassan off in rolling black Arabic.

There was nothing to do on shore at that time of day, but the ship was enveloped in a black pall of coal-dust, so we retired to a café to wait till the coaling was over.

THE SUEZ CANAL

The ship forged sluggishly through the gray muddy water of the canal—even so, our back-wash attacked the sand-bagged banks savagely.

In the shimmering heat of midday it was difficult to tell water from sand-dunes, and

mirages of palm trees and huts gave the impression of islands on a placid lake.

Suddenly the sky took on a sinister copper hue and stewards rushed madly about closing every scuttle and port-hole.

"Damnation!!" said the Major.

"Just our luck!" said Tyler.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Oh nothing—only we are going to eat sand, sleep on sandy sheets, and shake sand out of our boots for the rest of the voyage," growled the Major. Even as he spoke the wind howled like a banshee and the sand beat like rain against the ship, whirling over it in dark menacing drifts like storm-clouds. It seeped in through the sky-lights and even seemed to work its way through the water-tight scuttles —sand in our eyes, sand down our necks—our teeth gritted on sand—the air was full of it—the sky dark with it—and the wind shrieked like gleeful sand-demons.

Then, as suddenly as it had come, it was over. The sky was a burning blue again and save for the heaps of sand on deck it might have been a dream.

But the Major was right—we had traces of it with us till the end of the voyage.

THE RED SEA

SUEZ, which marks the end of the Canal, is attractive at night with its lights and shadowy silhouettes. In the day time it is merely a collection of corrugated iron shacks and a few more important buildings of the canal officials —a shabby little village, this gateway to the East.

We cleared, and passed on out into the beauty of the much dreaded Red Sea—painted mountains on each side and the Twelve Apostles, small rock islands, one behind the other. Mount Sinai looms in the distance, brooding —there is an expectant calm over everything, as though mountains and sea are waiting for a second miracle. Would the waves suddenly part and Pharaoh's army, resurrected, ride out onto the land again. . . .

If the wind is astern the ship becomes a floating Turkish bath. In the old days, when steamers made only eight to ten knots, they had to go back over their course at night to

give the passengers air and sleep. Even now, though the ships steam faster than any wind in that part of the world, the nights are ghastly hours of sweat-soaked slumber when the wind is abaft. Every one sleeps on deck, women to starboard, men to port. Low toned voices and the glowing points of cigarettes on the one side—the wail of fretful children and tired mothers' voices soothing or scolding on the other. . . .

ADEN

THERE is a bagpipe lament or dirge called "The Barren Rocks of Aden." If you have ever seen the rocks of Aden you will agree that a dirge is the only music and bagpipes the only instrument that could possibly do them justice.

In the shadow of an extinct volcano this little town of government barracks and tumble-down houses bakes under the pitiless sun in summer, and shivers under the cold winds in winter.

It is difficult to realize just how barren it is. The only water supply is sea-water after the salt has been removed, and the water boiled

and filtered. Coaling station and army post —that's all—and the coaling station is fast losing its importance, with the ever increasing use of oil.

Still, for those going East it is another milestone—and the nightmare of the Red Sea is forgotten in the comparative freshness of the Indian Ocean.

Chapter Two

BARABBAS—AND OTHERS

AT BOMBAY, the first Europeanized splendor of the East envelopes one—also its squalor.

Ballard Pier rose in its magnificence. Spindle-legged policemen in blue cotton tunics and shorts patrolled the docks; here and there a European sergeant or official, in white uniform and sun helmet, lent an air of efficient supervision.

On the pier itself, the Major's bearer (body-servant) met him. Conob had not let him know on what ship he was coming, nor even when he expected to return, but there was the bearer.

A man may leave India for two or three years, but if he has parted on good terms with his bearer, he is almost sure to find him waiting at the dock on his return. A bearer will suddenly inform his present master that his old Sahib is returning, draw his pay, and

go, and it is part of the unwritten law of Sahibs not to try to prevent him, nor to refuse him his pay up to date.

All of this of course does not apply to mere travelling bearers, whom tourists employ for six months or so.

We piled into a *Tikha gharry.*

"Taj Mahal Hotel *jow*," roared the Major, and off we rattled.

What a name to conjure with! I could see it in my mind's eye:—cool marble halls, tinkling fountains and water-gardens, silent cat-footed servants divining one's needs before one spoke, the hordes from the ship lost in its vast marble depths. . . .

The gharry stopped. Everything I had imagined was there—but how different. Garden—yes, one or two palms almost as tired and dusty as ourselves. The mob from the ship was lost—behind mountains of trunks and duffle-bags. And the soft-footed servants (it is hard to make a noise with bare feet on a stone floor) were jabbering like irritated monkeys, and far too busy fighting amongst themselves to hear the increasing roar of the *Sahib-log* demanding drinks.

The Pearl Mosque of Lahore

From the custom of carrying such loads as these, Indian women acquire their marvellous posture

A fakir arrived at Madura for the festival of the fish-eyed goddess

Thanks to Conob's bearer our luggage turned up and was stacked in one corner of the caravansary: two minutes later it was buried under a heap of other bags, but still it was there.

Tyler wangled one room, no bath, out of a harried half-caste room-clerk, and we retired to wash up before lunch.

It was a dark and gloomy chamber, with walls of a dingy brown—ideal protective coloring for the wall-lizards and enormous brown spiders one finds all over India. In lieu of curtains the window was covered by a woven straw mat, which rolled up at night, and the only light in the room filtered through an open-work pattern in the bricks above the window. The floor was "crazy china" (bits of broken crockery set into concrete in a crude sort of mosaic) hideous enough in the half light; but when the sun shines on it the electric fan whirring above is reflected in each bit of china and the whole floor seems to be crawling. The doors were of the gin-mill type, like the old swing doors in New York's bygone saloons. Most important of all was the electric *punkah* (fan). It spat sparks, almost wrenched itself

loose, and three spiders scuttled out of the regulator box, but finally it settled down to an asthmatic, complaining groan. God bless Mr. Edison, and Mr. Houston too. . . .

I aired a bit of knowledge of the East acquired in New York, but it instantly died of exposure.

"Look here, I want to get hold of a native tailor and have him make me some white suits. I brought one from London for him to copy."

Tyler sniggered—the Major was rude.

"You poor, blasted tender-foot—don't you know it would take two days to get hold of a Dhurzi and a week for him to finish the job, and we're leaving at three?"

"But I thought they would sit down outside your door and . . ."

"We all thought that our first time out. Why the devil didn't you say something about it on the boat? We might have bribed the ship's tailor to make them for about twice what it would have cost you in London. You'll have to wait till you get to Calcutta."

Going down the corridor I noticed a native servant squatting outside every door, his little bundle of possessions on the left and his shoes

on the right. I was much impressed by this show of respect, but the Major was indignant.

"This country is going to the dogs," and he scowled. "Five years ago those blighters would have stood up and salaamed as we went by." And as though he had overheard us the next one we passed rose apologetically and saluted.

Downstairs the turmoil was subsiding and we pushed our way into the dining room and sat at a table with the two other ship's acquaintances, Johnston and Hovey. The Major as usual, gave tongue.

"Qua hai!!"

It was directed impartially at each and every scurrying waiter, and there was a treble chorus of,

"Ekhdum Sahib" . . . (right away, sir).

He was not at all placated.

"Don't you 'Ekhdum' me, you three-legged sons of owls!" He grabbed a passing shirt-tail and hung on till we had given our order.

Hotel and dining car menus are written in English, but unfortunately few Khitmutgars, or waiters, speak this tongue, so a compromise has been made by carefully numbering each

course. By this means the newly arrived gourmet need only count up to ten to be able to pick his way from hors d'oeuvres to tooth-picks. The Khitmutgar presents the menu—you notice that there is a 2 to the left of Soup, and pointing firmly say, "Doh number." He disappears and, *mirabile dictu*, comes back with soup, or what passes for soup. You then see something written about "Sôle á la Maître d'Hôtel"—you say "4 number"—he says something about "munchli," and you get fish. Most Indian hotels are on the old American plan, so there are no figures on the right side to confuse or to restrain.

This first luncheon in India I decided to try the fodder of the country, and plunked for No. 3—curry! It was, if anything, worse than the curry-powder abortion one gets at home, and it was not until two years later that I discovered the difference between hotel curry and the same dish prepared in a Sahib's house.

Tiffin over, I bade farewell to the Major and Tyler and started for the train with Johnston and Hovey.

At the station I came in personal contact with the East, and then and there "a fellow

needs a friend" or servant. I had five pieces but, alas, no servant. Some twenty coolies hurled themselves on the miserable five, in a series of football scrimmages, which included three free for all fights among themselves, and banged and bounced them to a compartment on the train. One more wrangle with Johnston's bearer as to where to stow my stuff, and they gathered around me for their hire. I gave them money, whereupon, a howl of indignation, injured dignity and general race-hatred broke loose. I doubled the amount, and the din redoubled. Hovey sent his bearer to the rescue His method was worthy of Wall Street. First he asked me for more money, and then collected that already distributed. The coolies, thinking there was to be a fresh deal on a larger scale, gave it back like lambs. Whereupon, he dealt out exactly half the original amount and handed me the rest. He closed the argument with a few swift kicks, and peace reigned once more.

. . . . .

Comfort on an Indian train depends on your bearer and your kit. No sheets, pillows or

towels are provided. You take your own bedding and a portable icebox; and if you want hot water for shaving, your boy brings you a mugful from the engine's boiler. Hovey took pity on me and lent me bedding, and had his servant make up my bunk.

A Bengal-Nagpur Railway dining car is the world's worst, bar none. But there is one golden rule *in re* all Indian hotel tables-d'hôtes and dining car menus: if you find *anything* you can eat, make a meal of it.

At this first dinner, I, in my ignorance, slighted some fairly good curry, holding back for the chicken course. Now the word for chicken in Hindustani is *meugi*, but a *meugi* is far more like a feather-bearing cockroach than a bird—and I went to bed still hungry.

. . . . .

At Benares, the first big town, we were pestered by hawkers of brassware and other trash absorbed by tourists. I remembered hearing that this was the great town of pilgrimages, and was impressed by the swarms of them waiting on the station platforms. On in-

quiring, however, I learned that the crowd was merely the average travelling public, or rather an accumulation, for Indians are not to be hurried, even in regard to trains.

A man, his wife and grandmother, two great-aunts, five children, six chickens, and possibly a goat, having bought the minimum amount of tickets, camp down on the station platform to await the train. They spread out their bedding, strike up conversations with other families around them, chew betel-nut, and spit. A train thunders into the station—they look at it with a mixture of admiration and mild curiosity. About this time it is pulling out again. They generally discover that it is their train—too late! The jabbering redoubles and there is a certain amount of agitation, but with the fatalism of the East they settle down again among their household goods, hoping to catch it next day.

It is said that the record for this kind of thing is six days—and *then* the station master had to see to it himself that the record breakers caught the train.

After all, what difference does it make in a

country where the same word is used for yesterday and tomorrow!

. . . . .

When we finally pulled into Howrah station, Calcutta, I encountered further troubles. In the first place, the telegram I had sent to a friend was only delivered three days after my arrival, so there was no one to meet me. Having put my faith in the Bombay *dhurzis*, I had only the one suit of white clothes which I had landed in, and after two days in the train it was more black than gray. In spite of my dingy appearance I persuaded a wild Sikh taximan to drive me to the Great Eastern Hotel. Here again my looks told against me. The Eurasian room clerk assured me most definitely that the stokers' and firemen's home was along Diamond Harbour Road. Not until my baggage arrived in the hotel bus was I able to convince him that I was in the right hotel.

I then went to bed, while my lone, erstwhile *white* suit was washed and pressed.

Life was not full of charm that day. The sun beat down on the tin roof above me, my head throbbed like a steam-engine, and the

crows squatting on neighboring housetops, cawed incessantly—some of them perched on the window-ledge and even flopped into my room.

No servant—no clothes—no friends—and it was May, which in Calcutta is the middle of the "hot weather."

A knock at the door, and in came a villainous looking scoundrel, straight out of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. I recoiled till he explained in broken English that he was looking for a job as bearer. This was the animal against which all people going East are warned—a hotel runner, and I realized it, but at that moment I would have taken on Barabbas himself.

Negotiations began:—

"Sahib downstairs tell me Sahib want bearer."

"Well, I might try you. How much do you want?"

"Sixty rupees month."

I gasped. This was double the amount I had been told to pay a first class bearer. I looked Barabbas up and down in amazement, and in so doing noticed the native's feet, and sud-

denly realized that he had come into the room with his shoes on.

"What the devil do you mean wearing shoes in a Sahib's room?"

Barabbas gave a guilty start and disappeared out of the door. I thought he had gone forever, but he soon reappeared, barefooted and apologetic.

"Now then—how much did you say you wanted?"

"Forty rupees, Sahib."

We compromised on thirty, and he got to work on my kit.

News travels fast in the East (except by telegraph) and that night several men came around who had been asked to look me up. Their first act of kindness was to fire Barabbas.

One of them, Cook, carried on the inquisition.

"Weren't you Watkins Sahib's boy?"

"Yes, Sahib."—the bearer looked uncomfortable and shuffled his feet.

Cook turned to me.

"Give him three rupees, and I'll send you round a good bearer in the morning."

Barabbas pouched the coins and disappeared, and Cook explained:

"That fellow worked for old Watkins once. He got into a nasty fit of sulks, and one night when Watkins was dining out took a razor and slashed every suit, shirt, and shoe the old man owned. That's why I think you'd do better with someone else."

Bright and early the next morning a cheerful creature turned up with a note from Cook. I never learned what his real name was, but instantly dubbed him "Beaming Bill."

Bill was a first-class body servant, but unfortunately he was an Uriah, that is, a man from the province of Behar and Orrissa. All these people are Hindus and one runs foul of various caste customs in taking them on as first servants. It is an unwritten law that a man's own bearer—or first servant—shall eventually be butler when his Sahib marries and has a house of his own. All very well—but even to serve European food breaks a Hindu's caste, so you must have Mohammedans in the dining room. On the other hand—Mohammedans consider themselves the conquering race and won't take orders from a Hindu.

Q.E.D. It is simpler to start with a Mussulman bearer.

. . . . .

The Great Eastern was crowded, and on going down to dinner I found a short, sturdily built man at my table. He was a genial sort of fellow, a tea-planter, and had come down to Calcutta for two weeks' leave. It seemed strange to me that a man should come down from the hills in the middle of the hot weather, but I had forgotten the attractions of civilization.

Planters are a hard lot, but then their's is a hard life. They live miles away from one another, and see no one but natives for weeks on end. While they are on their tea gardens they are steady and hard working, but unless you are looking for trouble, steer clear of tea planters on leave in a big town.

I went on talking and he went on drinking until dinner was over, when a drive was suggested to cool off. We jumped into a passing taxi and he gave various orders to the driver, not one word of which I understood.

It was a pleasant night and I felt almost

cool again as we hurtled through the deserted streets. Suddenly the taxi stopped with a screech of brakes before a gay little bungalow. Every window was open and music and light poured forth. The planter, who had been somewhat silent during the drive, came to life, and I suddenly realized that he was tight as a tick.

"Come on, old man . . . hic . . . hic . . . jus' goin' visit some frens mine!" and he shot through the lighted door. He had told me he did not know a soul in Calcutta, so I thought I had best follow and try to retrieve him.

One look inside the house assured me that we were not intruding. The piano—the mirrors—the red plush furniture—our hostess in black satin—and the daughters of the house in almost classical ballet-dress left no doubt of our welcome. Business was slack and the planter's entrance must have seemed like the return of "Reginald, the long-lost heir."

My one idea was to get him out—and our hostess read it in my eye, for she gave battle immediately.

She tried her wiles—but seeing I was determined, soon changed her tactics and became

really nasty. The gist of which was that if I wished to go, why not leave my friend. I explained with dignity that I was not the sort of man to abandon a comrade in such a sink of iniquity just because he happened to be drunk. This was too much . . . I have heard righteous indignation voiced before and since, but never with such picturesque trimmings.

And the funny part of it was that the good lady was perfectly right. I couldn't have found a safer place in all Calcutta to leave a drunken man. But, my local knowledge being limited at that time, I dragged my friend into the waiting taxi, and off we went.

Twenty yards down the road the car stopped again and out popped the planter—I after him. I was beaten by a yard. My quarry disappeared into another wide-open door, and I had to start the same argument all over again. Once more, I fought our way out, firmly grasping the protesting planter, and this time I gave the order to the taxi-driver myself. But there was a sharp corner to turn, and the car slowed down to take it. With one frenzied bound my charge left me, scuttled up a path, and disappeared into a third well-lighted doorway.

As the taxi rolled on I heard shrieks of welcome and merriment, and could even distinguish the voice of my erstwhile companion calling on me to join him. But what would you—this time I left him to his fate.

. . . . .

To put it mildly, my first three weeks in Calcutta were somewhat hectic.

My position was different from that of a young Englishman coming out to join a British firm. In the first place, all Americans in business in India are "damned Yanks." Then again, in America we have a tendency to overdo the hospitality stunt to foreigners; we put them up for clubs—we ask them to our houses on the slightest provocation—we lay ourselves out to give them a good time in general. No one could ever accuse the British of overdoing it. Though they accept everything they feel under no obligation, for as years go by and American cordiality continues, they take it for granted, naturally enough, as the "birthright of a superior race."

A young Britisher has a far easier time. They know, in advance, of his coming, and

room is made for him in a "chummery" (bachelor quarters), where the older men can keep an eye on him. His work is laid out, a servant is found in advance, and that important thing—transportation to and from the office is provided.

I was all on my own. My reception, from a business point of view, was polite but chilly. This was only natural if one considered conditions during the war. All those years the Calcutta shippers (exporters and importers) had had a marvellous run of prosperity. There were few representatives of American companies—prices were soaring—and the attitude to all buyers was "Take it or leave it." Little breaches of contract such as shipping late and failing to cover freight and exchange didn't bother them in the least, and New York had to grin and bear it.

Now the war was over, and I had the pleasant job of looking into past discrepancies, settling old claims, and being disagreeably inquisitive. Still more annoying, I was to play the market for my firm, thereby cutting down a lot of the shippers' profits.

Holy cattle on the streets of Calcutta

Umbrellas at Benares, under which the devout offer up their three-thousand year old prayers to Holy Mother Ganga

Chapter Three

THE CITY OF DREADFUL KNIGHTS

CALCUTTA, in 1920, was a city of profiteers. Witness the rolls of honor in the civilian clubs, which in order to make a decent showing included the names of every one who served in the army or navy during the war, not merely those who died, as in all other parts of the world. There were various current excuses for not having gone, ranging from flat feet, to honest-to-God cold ones. One got used to the pat phrase, "indispensable for making munitions," and even swallowed the fact that an appendix operation could lay a man up for the whole war; but what did get under the skin was the way they patronized the men who had gone.

All this is neither here nor there; but the fact remains that prices were sky-high, and only those who had stayed behind could afford the luxuries of life.

The rent of a five-room flat, in any decent quarter, was anywhere from three to five hundred dollars a month; servants' wages had gone up almost fifty per cent, and stores and foodstuffs imported from Europe were almost out of sight. Rolls-Royces were appearing as fast as they could be shipped from home. All this extravagance was due to competition among the younger business men, many of whom had become partners, in spite of themselves, during the war.

A partner in a British firm in India is known as *Burra-Sahib* and enjoys certain privileges. He does not have to get to his office at any fixed time and may leave to play golf whenever the fancy takes him. Certain clubs are open to Burra-Sahibs and to Burra-Sahibs only. The strange part of the hierarchy is that the average partner arrives at his exalted position through sheer tenacity of liver; if he can stand the climate for fifteen or twenty years he is more or less bound to arrive, regardless of any business ability—or lack of it. Which explains the first question an old-timer inevitably asks. "How long have you been out here?"

This simplifies matters for him, for he can thus judge how high you have risen in your firm, and just how civil he need be.

Burra-Sahibs go home each year, but for the most part return with a sigh of relief to the land where their full importance is appreciated.

I sat next one once at a dinner. It was a good dinner and I was thoroughly enjoying myself. With the salad he condescended to speak to me.

"Been out here long?"

"Only three years."

"How do you like Calcutta?"

"I am afraid I don't like it very much."

"Ah well, when you have been out here ten or twelve years, as I have, you will like it better."

I was amused, and also curious.

"Will I like it better, or will my sense of proportion merely be dimmed?"

Burra-Sahibs are not fond of psychological discussions, and I was left severely alone for the rest of the evening.

CALCUTTA AND SERVANTS

EUROPEANS in India must keep up a certain standard of living. In fact, this is so vital to the white man's prestige that most of the big firms will not allow their juniors to marry on less than a thousand rupees a month. And this did not go far when I was in Calcutta.

Take the servants, alone, a married couple must keep:

One head bearer, who acts as butler and who waits on table. (Mohammedan)
One house bearer.
Possibly another Khitmutgar (waiter).
An "Ayah," or Indian maid, for the woman of the house.
A pantry boy.
A cook.
A cook's mate.
A gardener.
A "syce," or groom, if one has horses or a car.
And finally, a sweeper, the lowest but most necessary of them all.

Ten servants seem a lot for a couple with modest means, but there is no way of cutting down.

The head boy will wait on table, take care of your clothes, run your house, but he would rather leave you than clean up any mess on the floor. Suppose some one upsets a vase of flowers. You get your head bearer, who will wipe off the table, but he then summons the house bearer to call the sweeper—the only one of the staff who will condescend to mop a floor. Which may or may not explain the necessity for so many minions. . . .

Membership in at least two or three of the clubs is part of the white man's burden—and a weary load it is. They range from the all-embracing Saturday Club, for men and women, to the Bengal—the Burra-Sahib's own. Small town clubs are the same the world over, and the Saturday has only one unusual rule. When a man marries, he must resign, and he and his wife stand for re-election. This is a protection to the other members in case he should commit social suicide and marry an "Eurasian" (a girl with Indian blood.)

Between Alpha and Omega lie the rather pleasant country clubs.

Even in hot weather, Tolly-Gunge is a delightful spot. The road out, leading through

two native bazaars and long rows of squalid Babu dwellings, is fraught with peril, for at any moment a fat native baby or, still more serious, a billy-goat on suicide bent, may hurl itself beneath the wheels of your car, with ensuing riots, explanations, and *Baksheesh* (hush-money).

But once at the club itself, except for native servants and the wheeling kites, it is hard to believe one is in India. The lawns are beautifully kept, green and fresh in contrast with the burnt brown of the rest of the landscape.

The kites are a real nuisance, so much so that an ancient retainer with a perfectly useless bow and arrow is there to hold them at a respectful distance. Otherwise they swoop down on some unsuspecting tea-party, carrying off whole cakes at a time. This may sound exaggerated, but the Indian kite is bigger than our hawk and as sure in striking on the wing as an eagle.

The caddies are purely Indian, small beady-eyed boys in ragged khaki jackets and enormous red cotton turbans, but this is the only difference between them and their European brothers. No, perhaps their technique in steal-

ing a ball is slightly better, for their toes are almost prehensile.

There are drawbacks to golf in India. The greens are well kept, but the fairways are like rock in the hot weather and bogs in the Monsoon. And over and above the normal hazards, there is always a sporting chance of meeting a cobra in a bunker or of disturbing a scorpion in one of the holes.

Peerless and alone, in the glory of its exclusiveness, stands the Bengal Club. International relations and diplomatic rank mean nothing to it. During the war a new French Consul-General came to Calcutta, and naturally, the Governor-General put him up for the Bengal Club. But he had reckoned without the hide-bound insularity of its members, who promptly pilled the "bloody foreigner." The Governor-General labored long and patiently with them, and fruitlessly. So he delivered an ultimatum: they might be as petty and as jealous as they liked in their own little squabbles, but the man he had proposed was the representative of England's greatest ally. Either he would be elected to the club or the Governor and all his staff would resign. . . . The

new member accepted his final election gracefully, as a right due the representative of his country; but at the end of the first month he paid his bill and resigned.

There is one club in Calcutta whose name is as good the world over as the Bank of England. I mean the Royal Calcutta Turf Club, organizer of the "Calcutta Sweep."

Most of us have heard of this gigantic lottery, but few people realize what trouble the stewards take to keep it clean and straight.

A member subscribed once to twenty thousand tickets, and through some mischance—(it was no fault of his)—it was discovered that one hundred of these tickets were being used as premiums in a sale of watches in London. Every ticket he had bought was cancelled, and the money returned, though this meant reducing the prize money by 200,000 rupees. I was there myself that night, and heard the stewards announce it. So I know it is not a romantic myth.

There have been a few minor changes since the Sweep was started, but the general rules of procedure are unchanged. Each member and

stand-member may apply for as many chances as he wants, cash down, ten rupees each. The club then writes notifying him he has been allotted so many tickets, numbers such and such, against "Nom de Plume" such and such—that is the whole formal transaction.

More than half the tickets are bought by members for other people. But should one of these tickets prove to be of any value, the club recognizes and pays the member through whom it was bought—him, and him alone. It speaks well for the men who belong that the rightful winner is always paid. This, of course, applies to stand-members, too, (as the name implies, those who may use the Turf Club grandstand, and buy tickets in the Sweep Stake, but who are not full members).

Draw-night is the event of the year. The biggest room in the club is crowded with excited, perspiring, cigar-puffing men. In spite of the punkhas whirring overhead, the air is soon blue with smoke, and the heat unbearable —but no one seems to notice it. Club servants flit about like white moths, ministering to us. Drinks are free on draw night. Even paper

and pencils for making lists of the drawing are provided, for no official list is printed.

. . . . .

At the end of the room, on a raised platform, is the apparatus for drawing the tickets. This consists of an enormous barrel, and a little keg, suspended on trunnions in a framework like the carriage of an old coast-defense mortar. In the barrel are hundreds of thousands of little ivory plaques, each one marked with the number of a ticket. The keg has a similar disc for every horse entered in the Derby. As horses have to be entered at birth for this race, there are naturally eight or ten times more entries than starters.

In the draw a horse which has been scratched is known as "dead horse." Every horse, however, starting or scratched, draws his share of ten per cent of the total sweep, which is divided this way:

The R.C.T.C.	10%
Divided amongst every horse drawn	10%
Chartered accountants' fees	10%
Holders of ticket—winning horse	40%

Holders of ticket—second horse.....	20%
" " " third "	10%
	100%

The stewards and officials take their places on the platform and start spinning the barrels around on their trunnions, so that the discs shall be thoroughly mixed. The presiding steward raps the table with his gavel and there is an eager hush. First he reads out the sum total of the sweep, the names of the accountants who have checked it, the list of members whose tickets have been cancelled, with the reason for so doing—and the drawing begins.

They draw a number from the little keg and give it to a horse from the list of entries: then one from the barrel, look it up on the list of tickets, and read out the "Nom de Plume."

The first official draws the horse.

"Spion Kop," he announces, and a thrill goes round the room.

The second favorite!

The second official drawns a ticket number. A moment's pause while they consult the list, and he announces,

"We three"—another thrill round the room —"number 8978 M.M."

There must be at least a thousand tickets under the name "We three," "Us four," etc., and one never knows to whom it belongs until the last figure is read.

And so it goes on till the last horse is drawn. Then begins the forming of pools to buy half shares in the favorites and other likely starters.

Sometimes the favorite or second favorite is held by some one in England; and then the cables fairly buzz with offers, for the first prize is worth over £150,000.

Three days later the Derby is run and the greatest excitement of Calcutta is over for another year.

Chapter Four

BABU-GENTLEMEN

THE LITERATE caste among the Hindus are called "Babus." If you wish to be very polite, you address them as "Babuji" for the word Babu has assumed a derogative meaning in the mouth of a European.

They are strange folk.

Their highest ambition is to get the degree of B.A. at one of the British Universities. To this end they sweat, grind, and study, in a terrific endeavor to memorize their text-books word for word. This effort kills most of their native intelligence, for how can they be expected to remember useful facts if their brains and memories are cluttered up with pages of Shakespeare, Virgil and "The Complete Letter Writer"?

In passing a native *busti* (hut) one often sees a Babu, stripped to the waist, sweat pouring off him, squatting on his heels beside a little oil lamp. In his hands he holds a well

worn volume from which he reads, repeating a passage over and over again:

"To be or not to be, that is the question . . . To be or not to be, that is the question . . . Whether 'tis . . . nobler . . . in the . . . . . . mind . . . to. . . ."

Sleep overcomes him and his head sinks forward. It comes up again, however, with a jerk, for the scalp-lock at the back of his head is tied with string to a nail in the ceiling. This is the Babu's economic substitute for black coffee and wet towels.

If a Babu actually gets his degree, he considers himself made for life. "For how can a just and benevolent Government refuse him an assured position after having come through such an awful ordeal?"

There are various other grades of education under that of B.A. One hears such expressions as:

"I am plucked B.A. third year Calcutta University."

Meaning that the erudite gentleman has flunked after his third year. Some fail to matriculate for reasons which vary from family troubles, illness, lack of funds, down to the

proverbial unfairness and favoritism on the part of the examiners.

Whether a Babu is a plucked B.A. or less, there are three unmistakable caste marks: first, an umbrella, from which no Babu is ever separated (if not actually using it he hangs it down his back by the crook of the handle, for all the world like a Chinaman's pigtail); second, a pair of pointed, patent-leather, elastic-sided shoes; third, a pair of Boston garters, always put on backwards, and plainly visible below the *dhoty* or loin cloth.

Their language is fearsome and awe-inspiring, particularly in letters.

Tableau:—The European head of a department, going through his mail; Babus and office Chokras fluttering around him.

He opens a letter and shouts,

"Mukerji!"

There is no answer.

"Bannerji, where is Mukerji this morning?"

"Sir, how can I say? He has not yet arrived at the office; therefore I am totally ignorant of his actual whereabouts."

Just then a small native boy, escorted by a

bearer, presents a chit (note). The European tears it open and reads:—

> Honoured Sir:—
>
> I have served your respectable firm for twenty years without rest or intermission; therefore do most humbly crave your honour's permission to absent myself for urgent family reasons.
>
> My wife has eloped with my best friend, and I greatly desire to follow up and investigate same.
>
> Trusting you will see no inconvenience in this breach of etiquette,
>
> Yours truly,
> Babuji Mukerji.
>
> P. S. My God, I am annoyed.

. . . . .

The Bombay Babu is like his Calcutta brother, save that he plays cricket instead of foot-ball.

The tale is told of a Burra-Sahib organizing a cricket match between married and single men of his office staff. Turning to one of these he asked,

"Now then, Babuji, which side are you going to play on, married or single?"

The Himalayas from Tiger Hill

Buddhist monks at the gate of the monastery at Darjeeling

"Sir, that is somewhat of a conundrum. How can I say? My first wife is dead; have not yet contracted second marriage; therefore may classify myself as mid-wife."

I was more than fortunate in my own Babu.

He came from the typewriter company, where he had learned stenography, and one glance at him sufficed to show he was not of the usual betel-chewing, slovenly Babulog (Babu tribe or kind). He was above the average height, straight as an arrow, and scrupulously neat; his keen brown eyes and, in fact, his whole appearance, inspired confidence.

I decided to try and experiment contrary to all advice, and treat him like a rational human being.

"What's your name?"

"D.R. Sen, Sir."

"How much do you want?"

"I have been offered two hundred rupees by the Imperial Bank of India."

I hesitated. A hundred and fifty was all my company had authorized me to pay, but there was something I liked about the man.

"Look here, Babu, I can only give you a

hundred and fifty until I have written home and have an answer from my company. But I think you are the man I want, so, until I get an answer, I will pay you the extra fifty out of my own pocket. You must understand, however, that if I can't get permission I will have to let you go, and find some one cheaper."

His face lit up.

"Sir, I should like to make a proposition also. In case your company will not grant 200, I will refund you 25 of the 50 you give me yourself."

This was obviously no ordinary Babu and I continued the experiment:—

"Babu, I am a stranger in your country, so I shall have to depend on you for certain information. I have noticed that the men around here call their secretaries and clerks Babu. Now, would you rather be called Babu or Sen?"

"Sir, Babu was originally a title of respect, meaning 'the educated one,' but now, in Calcutta, it has become a term of contempt."

So Sen he was called.

Little by little his past history came out, and my confidence in him grew. He had become an

orphan at an early age, and his uncle and aunt had sent him to the university. Their money had given out, however, and he was obliged to quit at the end of his first year. This was perhaps fortunate, as his natural intelligence had not been dimmed by the university cramming, and he had made himself into a first-class stenographer and secretary. According to the custom of Hindu families, he in his turn was now contributing towards the education of his little cousins.

Other business men were horrified at the trust I put in him; notwithstanding, the experiment worked, and Sen's loyalty became known all down Clive Street.

. . . . .

As representative of an American firm I got valuable advance information on the New York market, which was eagerly sought after by native speculators.

The first time they tried to bribe me, I was angry and threw them out of the office; the next, I was amused; but the third time, I was heavily bored, and in my boredom thought of a way to choke them off.

"Now, look here, Juggernaut Gupta. You want my private cables from America?"

"No, Sir, not private cables, just information."

"Well, anyway, what you want me to do is to sell you my firm's tips, don't you? In other words, to betray my company's secrets!"

The fat Marwari waved his podgy, bejewelled hands in horror at such an idea.

"All right—all right—now keep your shirt on, and listen. Every man's got his price."

Juggernaut Gupta beamed encouragingly, and poor Sen looked distressed and shocked.

"I'll make a bargain with you," I went on, "I'll give you all advance dope I get for six laks of rupees ($200,000)."

The Marwari grinned foolishly and Sen sniggered.

"Sahib is joking: Where would I find my profit?"

"That's your business, Juggernaut Gupta. You are trying to buy my business honor, and that's the price. Take it or leave it."

The Marwari salaamed himself out of the office and Sen turned to me.

"Sir, that was a good joke, but they will try me next."

"Yes, Sen, I've thought of that. And when they do, don't discourage them. Just let me know."

Two days later Sen reported attempted bribery and corruption.

"How much did they offer you, Sen?"

"One thousand rupees, Sir, for the cable that came in this morning."

"All right, they're looking for trouble. Let's oblige them. Make me a copy of cable number 52 of last month, code and all. Date it yesterday, and have it look as though you had just decoded it."

Sen looked blank, but carried out the order.

"And Sen, you didn't discourage them, did you?"

"No, Sir. According to your orders, have pretended to be interested, but pleaded time."

"Good man! When I go out to lunch, they are sure to come back again. Then you sell them this cable of last month, cash down."

And even as I had foreseen, so it was.

On coming back from lunch two days later, I heard a flow of angry talk pouring from my

office. It was all in the vernacular but I recognized the voice of Gupta and chuckled inwardly. For though the cable Sen had sold them had been very useful a month ago, it did not exactly apply to the market of the day, and the Marwaris were vigorously protesting to this effect. The noise stopped sharply as I opened the door.

"Hello, Juggernaut! Waiting to see me? I'm not buying, today. In fact, I'm thinking of selling." (I had heard rumors of his buying heavily.)

Juggernaut gave a sickly grin, and denied any desire to sell or buy; he had just dropped in to ask what the Sahib had thought of the market.

The indignation meeting broke up, and from then on Sen also was left in peace.

. . . . .

As had been said before, Sen was an excellent stenographer, but occasionally some of the phrases in the American business letters defeated him:

"Dear Sirs:—

I understand that Birla is selling short in

New York. If you will cable me his prices there, I will know what he must cover for on this market, and we will catch him coming and going.

Yours truly,

"That's all, Sen."

Sen finished scribbling. He rose, then hesitated; something was evidently on his mind.

"What's the matter? Don't you understand?"

"Yes, Sir,—but kindly explain significance of last phrase."

"Which one, Sen?"

" 'Coming and going.' How can one be on the point of arrival when one is on the eve of departure?"

"Oh, that's just slang."

Sen's face broke into a sympathetic smile.

"Ho ho, I see, it is a joke!" and he retired content in having added another Americanism to his vocabulary.

Chapter Five

MONASTERY IN THE MIST

THE TRIP from Calcutta to Darjeeling is complicated in so much as it entails three changes—from standard to broad gauge, and from this to the little narrow gauge mountain railway. This last is not even ballasted, but is strewn along the mountain road as if some untidy child had aspired to impractical heights for his toy railway.

The carriages swing from side to side till all but the most hardened travellers are sick; and at one spot there is a loop, built out on posts over the mountain-side, so sharp that people at the end of the train can look into the windows of the first car. There is an alternative in the form of a motor-rail (one coach driven by a gasoline motor) but this breaks down at frequent and inconvenient intervals. You can also go by road in a char-a-banc; but one trip in these mountain juggernauts is sufficient for

the average man, however strong his love for risk and adventure.

I found very little of interest in the town, or village, of Darjeeling: a collection of hotels, all owned by the same man and varying in price and discomfort, the Planters Club, and a few European shops.

But after all is said and done, what matters the village itself, when it is surrounded by the awe-inspiring heights of the Himalayas—Mount Everest, Kitchenjungah, and the forbidden mysteries of Thibet just over the border.

The Himalayas—the name alone, and the enthusiasm of returning travellers, give the impression that these glorious snow-clad mountains are on view from sunrise to nightfall; the truth is, they are hidden by mist and clouds nine days out of ten.

Great was my wrath on discovering that I must rise at five in order to catch a fleeting glimpse of Everest, before it disappeared in the clouds for the day. Two hours of hard riding along mountain trails to Tiger Hill—just before we got there, down came the mists, and the trip was in vain. No, not in vain, for

it proved one of my pet theories—that a true Scot can no more do without golf than he can get along without whiskey. There on the little plateau from which rises Tiger Hill was a diminutive golf course, flags and all. If Mount Everest is ever scaled, they will probably find some taciturn Scotchman putting on an ice green at the summit.

In spite of fogs and clouds, the country round has a fascination of its own,—Sikhem, Ghum, and Nepal. The Bhutias are like their own climate—happy, sunny, smiling folk, overcast from time to time by clouds of superstition and the dread of mist-devils. Even in the short time I was there, I got the impression of mystery and isolation.

One morning the ponies came around and off we started, congratulating ourselves that the sun was out.

It *was* when we left Darjeeling, but by the time we reached Ghum, a cloud had drifted across the sky and waves of foggy mist were breaking against the mountain side.

This made navigation in narrow streets of the village most difficult. Fat, sloe-eyed children and thin pie-dogs scuttled from under the

feet of our ponies; heavily laden pack mules loomed up like ocean-liners in the fog. But on the whole it was pleasanter, for the usually filthy, butter-greased Thibetan and Nepali natives became mysterious flitting shapes, not unlike some of their own devils; besides, the fog seemed to kill some of the rancid odors, as well as veiling the squalor about us.

We turned out of the village and took a mountain trail towards the monastery. The path grew narrower and narrower, and we rode Indian file. Soon the fog became so thick that each of us rode in splendid isolation.

It seemed as though I had been going since the beginning of time, entirely cut off from all mankind, no sound to hear, nothing to see but the ears of my pony. Slowly and gradually I was aware of a sound. At first a mere disturbance in the atmosphere, it increased to the sad, muffled murmur of thousands of wings beating overhead, and finally to the volume of distant musketry. A tall, white ghost emerged from the fog, and I realized then that the noise came from the flapping of prayer-flags planted along the road. Still we went forward, past

an endless row of them fluttering in the mist, now faint, now loud as the wind rose and fell.

My ears picked up a new vibration: far away, almost in another century, came a low droning, rather like the swarming of bees on a hot summer day, or a requiem mass heard from a distance. Then came a faint, silvery tinkling. It swelled in volume, until my whole system was throbbing with it as we reached the gates of the monastery.

Our guide knocked. The door was opened by a placid Buddhist Lama, in dingy brown robes. His round face broke into a smile of welcome, but he spoke not a word; merely pointed our way to the temple, still twirling his prayer-wheel with the other hand.

The prayer-wheel is an ingenious device—a small metal cylinder revolving on its handle when whirled, thanks to a chain and weight. It is filled with carefully written Buddhist prayers and incantations, and every turn of the wheel represents so many prayers. Till its real object dawned on me, this mechanical means of acquiring merit seemed ludicrous.

The essence of the Buddhist religion is meditation—isolation from the world, physical and

mental. From actual experience I found that the physical effort of turning one of these wheels was just mechanical enough to free the mind from the material side of life.

The counterpart is found among the Levantines, Mussulmans, and other races that do not smoke. Here nervous energy, of no specific use and detrimental to calm thinking, is taken care of by rosaries or conversation beads. In the midst of an important discussion, take his amber beads from an educated Turk or Arab—his fingers twitch, he stammers, and he is lost. . . .

We picked our way across the court and up a wooden outside stair-case to the upper story of the temple.

Again I slipped into indefinite space. . . . There was nothing to mark the twentieth century, or for that matter, the tenth. We were in a huge loft, the floor covered with skins of animals, and the walls lined with racks of pigeon-holes. In each one was a Buddhist prayer, beautifully painted on long scrolls of vellum rolled around red lacquer batons. At the back of the room, through a square aperture cut in the floor, rose the calm wistful face

of an enormous gilded Buddha. The lower part of his body was in the room below. He was sitting cross-legged in the position of "renouncing the world"—and even so, the idol must have been thirty feet high.

The oil-paper windows became somber or opalescent as gusts of wind-driven clouds blew by. From below came the smoke of incense, and the chanting which we had heard on approaching the monastery. Piercing this, like a bird flying through a mist, was the continuous tinkle of a silvery bell. None of us spoke; on the contrary, we drifted apart needing to be alone. . . .

I felt dizzy, and things began to blur, not unlike the sensation of going under ether, only with a feeling of calm resignation instead of a choking desire to fight.

Then through it all came a sound, at first insignificant, but more and more horrible and insistent as my material senses began to analyse.

Have you ever been very near death—dying, in fact?

There is a certain feeling of relief in its finality. You are past pain and no worry or responsibility can hold you. You drift out faster

and faster toward the open sea which will calm all restless loneliness. Then comes a horrible wrench—the surgeon's voice or the administering of some stimulant, and you are dragged back by the heel-chain which you had forgotten. This time it was not so drastic, but equally dismal.

The sound became more and more insistent —tick—tock—tick—tock—tick—tock—tick—tock—

Finally I could hear it no longer. Turning I discovered on the wall behind me a horrible, white-faced, modern abortion from "Cook & Keldy," the leading clock-makers of Calcutta.

The spell was broken—so we left.

Chapter Six

MOHURRUM AND RAMMADAN

We had the lower floor of a two-storied house in Auckland Place. It was old-fashioned, with cool, high rooms, and gray and white marble floors.

There were plaster ceilings instead of the ceiling cloths one finds so often in the old houses, so it was extraordinarily free from snakes and scorpions—though, of course, we were always pestered by enormous, furry-legged, brown spiders. The brutes had bodies as big as a man's thumb—ugh! And damn difficult they were to kill, too. I've never seen anything like them for speed. Hurl a book at one on the wall, and—pht—pht—with a flicker of brown, it would be down, across the floor, and up the other wall. And all so fast that you'd think it must be another spider you had not noticed before. Judy hated them. She would stretch her fore-paws as high up on the wall as she could and sing to them a song of

challenge and death and of the fate awaiting them if they would only come down and meet her. And then, as though accepting the challenge, they would creep down towards her—and then, I would intervene with a slipper. . . .

Barring the first night, when I was welcomed by a scorpion on the bedpost, we had no venomous visitors, except once, through the kind offices of a *budhli* (temporary) bearer. But that was just before I left India—and comes much later.

The high-walled compound was shaded by huge golden mohr trees, and though it backed on the Lower Circular Road, at most times of the year it was delightfully cool and quiet. Now, let it be said that Lower Circular Road leads to Dhurumtollah, the biggest native bazaar. During the Hindu marriage season wedding processions, complete with flower bedecked carriages, hired merry-makers and fireworks, passed along it nightly. The better class nuptials had phoo-phoo bands, a deadly combination of natives playing European instruments in a repertoire of three tunes, or rather three tunes blended into one. The usual

order was a few bars from "Tipperary," a bit of "Marching Through Georgia," and a grand finale of "A Hot Time In the Old Town Tonight." Occasionally the band became divided against itself and attacked two tunes simultaneously—even then the police never interfered.

But the weddings were as the faint hum of gnats compared to the noise that went on during Mohurrum, that period of the year set aside as a time of mourning for the Mohammedan martyrs, Hasan and Hussain. Every night during Mohurrum marching parties would come down from Dhurumtollah along Lower Circular Road, and through Auckland Place to the tank in Auckland Square. Here they would scoop up mud to model miniature tombs of the saints (these to be used in the last days of the procession), and would then retrace their steps.

The religious principle involved is, doubtless, most praiseworthy, and the conduct of the marchers usually innocuous, but the noise they make is infernal. About nine o'clock at night a slight thrumming can be heard towards Dhurumtollah. This draws nearer, increasing

in volume till one can distinguish the deep notes of the heavy drums, and the accompanying yells of the followers of the Prophet. Burrump, Boomp . . . Burrump, Boomp Boomp Burrump, Boomp Boomp. . . . "Ya, Hasan . . . Ya, Hussain . . . Hasan, Hussain, Hasan, Hussain. . . . ," the uproar swelling to concert pitch as they swing round the corner of Auckland Square.

Now you can see them—naked fanatics in front whirling staves with blazing torches at each end; eyes and teeth shining white in sharp contrast to their black faces and bodies. Then the serried ranks of marchers shouting and shuffling in the lurid torchlight. Dignified bearded Mullahs conducting the ceremony, and good-natured, red-turbaned Para-Wallahs (native policemen) escorting and controlling the procession. The singing stops for a moment while they collect the mud, but the drums never cease; nor do the processions for that matter. As soon as one group has gone another takes its place, in accordance with a carefully arranged police schedule. Thus for seven nights they make sleep impossible and life hideous.

On the last night comes the grand procession—and the real trouble. The Mussulmans parade through the whole town, carrying *Tazias* or gorgeous tinsel models of tombs. Some of these are five or six feet high, and lit up like Christmas trees. If the police supervision is strict, all goes well; otherwise some enterprising Hindu, waiting around the corner from the line of march, heaves a brick into a Tazia as it is carried past. When this happens, it generally catches fire—and the rioting begins. The Mohammedans usually retaliate by cutting off the tail of a sacred bull. Sometimes they go even further and rush some unfortunate mooly-cow into a Hindu temple, where they cut its throat, thus desecrating the whole place. In this case, troops might just as well be called out to start with, for no police force can check the consequences.

The other big time of Mohammedan mourning is "Rammadan." For a month all good Mussulmans are supposed to fast from sun-up to sun-down; and as it takes place in May (the hot weather) tempers are apt to be short. It is hard on the Sahibs' tempers, too, if any Mohammedan servants have quarters near the

house. For fasting makes them sleepy all day, and they feast and carouse during the night.

Rammadan is officially over when the new moon is seen. Good Mussulmans collect by hundreds at nightfall to watch for it, and wherever it is first seen, the Mullahs of that district telegraph the glad tidings all over India. Next day the Mussulmans attend Mosque in new clothes, and after two days of feasting life settles down to its normal course.

Chapter Seven

THE DAY OF A BOX-WALLAH*

THE ELECTRIC punkas droned steadily; the crows cawing in the garden had taken up their day's work; the shuttered doors leading on to the veranda were closed—for the Sahib still slept. A white-clad figure slipped into the room with morning tea, and placed it beside the sleeper's bed. Judy, the bull-terrier, thumped her tail in recognition, and Abdul began his morning hymn:—

"Sahib, *tcha.*" (Sir, tea.)

No sign from the bed.

"*Tcha*, Sahib." (Tea, Sir.)

This time louder, but still no response.

"Sahib, *sahi saht budja.*" (Sir, it's half-past seven.)

This time a roar from the bed: "Go to Hell!!"

* Anyone in business in India, from merchant-prince to the pedlar who hawks his wares from door to door, is known as a Box-Wallah.

Abdul waited a moment, and then very softly the refrain was renewed.

"Sahib, *tcha—sahi saht budja—tcha,* Sahib . . ." ending in a plaintive wail.

Realizing further sleep was impossible, I sat up; whereupon Judy hurled herself at me, upsetting the tea tray.

Wonderful thing, morning tea in India; it gives one just enough courage to undertake the serious business of dressing.

The bearer opened the lattice-work shutters, allowing the sun to stream in, and Judy rushed into the garden to see if God had sent her a cat during the night. And so the slavery of morning routine began. It is not so different from anywhere else except that one breaks into a violent sweat once outside the zone of the punkah; and it might shock the democratic West to see a perfectly able-bodied man, just out of the bath, suffering a bearer to dry his feet, and put on his socks and shoes. But it is surprising how soon the climate undermines New England prejudices.

Then while Judy was chasing chipmunks, I climbed into the almost uniform business clothes—white duck trousers, Tussor silk coat,

and soft cotton shirt (silk next the skin becomes clammy after ten minutes, in that climate) and went in to breakfast, to register my daily protest against the milk. The milk in India is always blue, boiled, and well watered, and this morning, as on many another, they had substituted the strong smelling buffalo's milk for the cow's milk ordered.

. . . . .

Clive Street is the Wall Street of Calcutta. Outside the buildings are quite magnificent, for that part of the world, but their interiors are veritable rabbit-warrens, divided up into small dark pigeon-holes of offices.

I disappeared into one of these, situated in the back part of Gillander House. There were as yet no Indian brokers around, for having played the *Futka*, or native market, until three in the morning, they would not turn up till half-past ten or so—when the real market opens. As there was no mail in, I made the round of the shippers. Most people do this in office-gharries, but I always found it quicker to go on foot. I went first to George Hendersons'—one of the most alive firms at that time.

Outside the export department three or four European gunny brokers were seated on a bench waiting to see the chief of the department. As a buyer, I was a privileged person, so with a cheery "Good morning" I buzzed in ahead of them.

"Hello, Williams, how did the market close last night?"

"Very steady: For some reason or other the Marwaris put it up in the Futka market."

"What's the big idea? It was weak and declining at the close."

"Oh, they got hold of some kind of a rumor, I suppose. We'll find out when they come around."

After my round I went back to the office. Everywhere I had heard the same story—"steady market"—but no one knew why. At half-past ten my old friend Gupta-Lall burst in, much excited:—

"Sahib, Sahib! Market *boht ee-shteady* (very steady)."

"Yes, I know, Gupta. What's the trouble?"

"Sahib, not heard? War between America and Mexico ! !"

"But Gupta—even so, why should the market go up?"

"Sandbags!"

"Yes, I know, sandbags are made out of jute cloth. But there won't be any trenches as in the last war."

Gupta looked unconvinced, so I went on.

"See here, Gupta, admitting that there really is a war, it will be almost entirely cavalry fighting. Now just how many sandbags do you think a cavalry horse can carry, plus trooper and equipment?"

Gupta blinked solemnly, but repeated obstinately:

"Sahib, a war is a war, and in time of war, *ee-shteady* demand for sandbags makes strong market!!"

He was perfectly right—though the war vanished into the realm of rumor the market went up. Once Marwaris get an idea into their heads, the flimsier the rumor the firmer their stand.

. . . . .

Ordinarily the rupee is worth one shilling and four pence, but in 1924 it varied from two

and six to one and three pence. This added further uncertainty and chance to all operations. A man might catch the Hessian market at the bottom, have it go up steadily, and then lose all his profit by covering or not covering the rate of exchange. There was no fixed rate of exchange, and it varied as much as three points according to the different banks' need for sterling. The visits of exchange brokers were, therefore, eagerly awaited.

By half-past eleven the European brokers would reach my office. Jaunty people, these, with a knowing air, though none of them had the slightest idea whether the rupee was going up or down. A few, however, were honest enough to admit it, and of these "Cocky," as he was called, would burst into the office, slump down in a chair and mop his brow.

"Doing anything, old man? I've just done two and a penny four month sight with the Imperial Bank."

"I don't know, Cocky. I've got something to cover, but what do you think it's going to do?"

"Gawd, man, do you think if I really *knew*,

I'd be running around Clive Street in this heat with a dinky little notebook and pencil?"

Cocky got the business.

The next one who came in was as full of rumors and mysterious tips as a race-course tout, all of which proved to be unfounded.

Then came the freight brokers; but here the situation was somewhat different. Freight space, from being almost impossible to get during the war, was now a drug on the market. Every one was cutting prices, and the amount of secret, lower rates quoted was amazing. I escaped all this intrigue, however, for I dealt with a man so straight he almost bent backwards.

From twelve to two every one went to "tiffin." Most of the big firms ran a lunch in their own offices for their staff. Other people fed at the Royal Exchange on Clive Street, or went home. As a whole, the Calcutta merchants were pretty abstemious till sundown, for in that climate, even *beer* and business do not go together. It's hard enough as it is to keep awake after tiffin.

From two on, the gunnybrokers become hectic. They swing out of their office gharries

before they even stop, and tear up the shippers' office stairs, two steps at a time. One broker made a specialty of telling each of his clients, "in strict confidence, of course," what he had been buying for the others, thus creating an impression of heavy buying and a rising market.

A Jewish broker came in to see me, terribly pleased with himself. His firm had offered some goods to a South African company just before the market went up. It had been a firm offer, so it looked as though they were stuck. Nothing daunted, he cabled immediately:—

"If our offer too high, make counter-offer."

The South African company took the bait, cabling back a lower price. Whereupon the Jew replied gleefully:—

"Regret cannot accept your offer. Market now higher."

I congratulated him, but made a mental note, in case of future dealings with the gentleman.

Six o'clock. Theoretically business is over, but the native exchange is just getting under way; and I had a suspicion, from the buzz going on in that dilapidated gambling den, that

some of my Marwari friends would telephone me during the night, to try and sell me some of their rumor bought goods.

Sure enough, they rang me up while I was in my bath, and I was almost electrocuted. They called me up twice at dinner, which did not help matters, for something was radically wrong with the kitchen, and a row was imminent with the cook.

Coffee over, I sent for the miscreant, whereupon a hullabaloo broke loose in the servants' quarters. Abdul appeared, breathless and somewhat agitated.

"Sahib! Cook say he not come—Him very bad man—Threaten me with knife—I think him drunk!"

Rushing out I came face to face with a dramatic figure draped in a red blanket and waving a carving knife. To say I stopped short would be understating the case.

He came at me, making most unpleasant passes with his knife, evidently expecting me to put up my fists. It never occurred to the poor fool that I might use my feet. He was both surprised and hurt when I first kicked the knife out of his hand, and then slugged him

in the jaw. Just then the telephone rang, and leaving Abdul to drag him to bed, I went to answer it.

"Sahib, market still *boht ee-shteady.* Many buyers. Are you buyer?"

"No thanks, Gupta. Let me know if there is any change."

About midnight I was just dozing off when the telephone rang once more.

"Sahib, market totally demoralized—All sellers—No buyers—Are you buying?"

"No thanks, Gupta, but thanks for calling me up."

This was what I had been waiting for. Slipping a great coat over my pyjamas I drove to the telegraph station, woke a sleepy Babu, and got off a cable to my firm.

"Calcutta, midnight.
Market closed here weak and declining. Advise selling heavily New York at opening."

Once home I slept the sleep of the just, knowing that my firm would catch the market napping before the ordinary cables came in.

Chapter Eight

THE GANDHI RIOTS

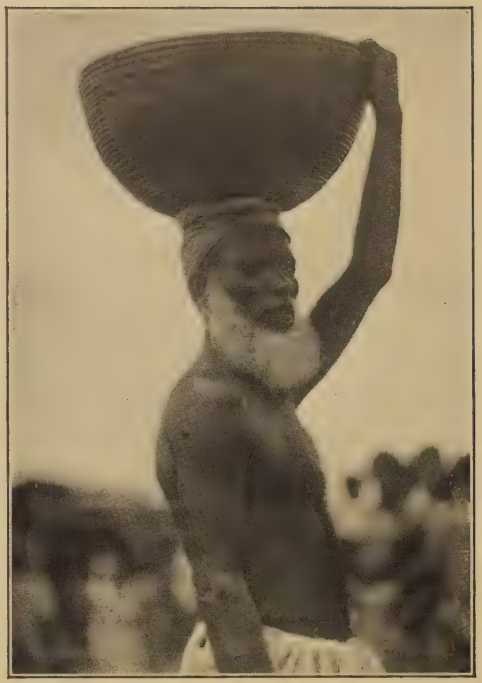
EVER SINCE the Mutiny there have been insurrections, sedition-plots, and other movements against the government in India, and there probably always will be. In all these disturbances, the stumbling block to real success has been the dissension among the various creeds and races, which has enabled the British to play them one against the other.

The Amritsar trouble, or the "Dyer affair," was a Sikh sedition plot. Though the repercussions were far-reaching, and it might have spread into a general uprising, the origin was purely Sikh. In the old days they were a race of warriors, and the Sikh was a fine specimen of manhood. Now, however, the British having stopped internecine wars there are few ways for these fighting men to prove their mettle; so the average Sikh drives a taxi, goes into the army, or starts trouble on his own.

During the Mutiny of '57, several regiments

Holy Men on their day-beds of rusted spikes

A Nautch Dancer of southern India



A patriarch from the delta of Brahmaputra

remained true to their salt, and since then all Sikhs have enjoyed an enormous reputation for fidelity. But talk to army officers, not in a Sikh regiment, or police commissioners, and they will tell you that these faithful upholders of the British Raj are not only as temperamental as opera-singers, but also have been mixed up in more bomb outrages, anarchist plots, and hidden Hell in general than any other race in India.

Just after the Amritsar massacre, as the Indian agitators called it, the *Swaraj* (Home Rule) party came to life and joined forces with the Kaliphate party. The Swaraj, Hindu nationalists, were headed by Mr. Gandhi, whose slogan was "non coöperation and passive resistance," and the Mohammedans were led by the Ali brothers. Their idea at first was to obtain better peace terms for the Turks, inasmuch as the Sultan of Turkey was the Grand Kaliph, but this idea was soon lost sight of, and it became merely a Mohammedan nationalist party.

For once, Mohammedans and Hindus were working together and they made such progress that British rule was seriously menaced. Then

came a rift in the lute—the Moplah rising, during which some enthusiastic Mussulmans mutilated cows and tried to convert a few Hindus by force. The Hindu leaders protested and their Mohammedan colleagues did all they could to smooth things over. When Mohurrum came with the usual Mohammedan processions through the streets, police supervision was slightly relaxed, and rioting broke out between the two creeds. Their old religious differences were resurrected, and the two parties split.

In Calcutta itself there were one or two fair-sized riots. Inevitable, if you consider that the jute-mills alone employ over three hundred thousand men. The long-suffering police had their hands full.

It is an amazing sight to see the Calcutta police handling a turbulent crowd. Instead of truncheons, they carry *lathis*, five-foot staves, and with these they bar the way, stemming any attempt at a rush. Their patience and good-humor are remarkable, for an Indian crowd can be more than aggravating. If bricks begin to fly, and the shouting changes to the muttering of a mob, they use their staves in earnest.

A blow on the shoulder from a *lathi* will bring the strongest man to his knees. Should things get beyond the municipal police, armed constabulary are called out and, as a last resort, the garrison of Fort William and the local militia.

When the armed police arrive anything may happen, for they are Ghurkas, pugnacious little devils from the hills, who love a scrap. During the general trouble, they were twice sent out unarmed, for they are fairly useful with their fists. But in the face of such odds they were badly hammered. The next time they were called out they refused to go without rifles, or at least *Kukri* knives—their native weapon. There was heavy firing and the usual questions were asked afterwards in the legislative council. The Indian members complained that the police had fired without sufficient provocation, so they got a native sergeant up on the stand.

Q.—"Who issued ball-cartridges?"

A.—"Sahib, ball-cartridges were issued before we left Thanna."

Q.—"Who gave order to fire?"

A.—"Sub-inspector gave order."

Q.—"When did Sub-inspector give order to fire—before or after the inspector was killed?"

Here the inquiry was ended, for even the Indian members admitted that the death of a European inspector justified firing.

Some of the younger Europeans decided to take a hand themselves, and break up any political processions. Accordingly, they formed a group of minute-men, and would sally forth armed with sawed-off polo mallets. One night word came that a really big procession was forming in one of the bazaars, and the vigilante committee, complete with polo mallets, rushed to the scene. Sure enough, there it was! Music in front—then peacock banners—two or three carriages—and an enormous crowd on foot. The odds looked formidable, but the little group of stronghearts waded in. It was all over in ten minutes. The paraders fled, leaving the field and much loot, in the form of peacock banners and band instruments, which were promptly carried off as trophies.

Next day a very humble and whining deputation called on the victors. The spokesman

advanced into the compound, the rest waiting respectfully outside the gates, and began his petition:

"Would the young Sahibs kindly return the peacock banners and the band instruments, for he was a poor old man and most earnestly desired to get on with his daughter's wedding procession."

Further activities were restrained by the older heads of the European community.

After each riot came a demonstration of armed force. This sounds formidable, but merely consisted in marching a militia battalion through the various native bazaars. Most of the natives, if the truth be known, enjoyed it far more than did the troops, for Indians love any sort of pageant, particularly if accompanied by music.

The Calcutta-Scottish were generally chosen for this sort of thing, for with war-pipes skirling and kilts swinging, even a militia regiment is impressive. Occasionally some insolent agitators, wishing to show off, and sure of the benevolence of the British Raj, would saunter across the line of march. Retribution followed immediately, generally in the form

of a hefty smack from a leather sword-scabbard. The next day the whole vernacular press would ring with the outrage:

"Unwarranted attack on innocent bystanders by brutal, licentious soldiery! How long, oh India, will you squirm under the mailed heel of the oppressor?" etc.—ad nauseam.

The general effect, however, was salutary.

. . . . .

By way of celebrating the Prince of Wales' visit, the Swaraj party declared a general strike. Everything was to be shut down, and all Europeans' servants were ordered to stop work or take the consequences. Most of the Mohammedan servants stood fast, but the lower caste Hindus were terrified. Almost every sweeper in the European quarter received a self-sent telegram. "Come quick, Mamma dying." They were very much hurt and aggrieved when their masters divined the real reason and refused them leave of absence.

There were one or two cases of stopping private motor cars and beating up the native drivers; but the Europeans took to violence, too. On seeing a group of strikers, we would

order our drivers to head straight for them. This would scatter them, and if any of them jumped on the running board, we would deal with them from the back seat. In the Bazaars the native shops were shut, but as everyone had previously laid in a week's supply, the owners of the shops were the only ones to suffer. Therefore, the whole affair was a dismal failure.

Before the Prince's arrival in Calcutta, extra precautionary measures were taken. The good citizens formed themselves into a sort of auxiliary police force, known as the civic guard. They wore black armbands with an insignia and carried truncheons, and from the visible point of view alone, had quite a good moral effect on the native populace.

The Prince's visit passed off peacefully, as far as native riots were concerned, for squads of the civic guard patrolled the streets every night—just in case. Unfortunately, while some of the worthy burghers were pacing their beats, the local burglars took the opportunity to go through their houses.

Chapter Nine

DOGS

THE TENETS of the Hindu religion forbid the taking of life except in battle. This applies to animals too, no matter how badly the poor brutes are maimed or suffering. All through the country one sees half-starved cattle and ponies trying to keep alive on what they can crop from the dry-burned country-side. Since they are no longer capable of work, or of giving milk, their late masters have ceased to feed them. Yet to put them mercifully out of the way is considered a sin. In contrast to this taboo of killing, it would be hard to find any place where animals are more cruelly treated. Take the water-buffaloes, the heavy draft animals of India. Their natural environment, during the heat of the day, is a river or bog, and yet one sees these poor brutes at full noon in the hot weather dragging some enormous load, their tongues hanging out, froth dropping from their mouths, and their tough hides,

accustomed to water, almost cracking under the pitiless sun. If they become restive or unmanageable, they are reminded of their helpless slavery by a jerk of the knotted cord that is passed through their nostrils.

The R.S.P.C.A. thunders, arrests and fines; and humane Europeans take the law into their own hands, all to no avail. The same with pariahs or pie-dogs; one sees them by the hundred, starved, covered with mange, perhaps dragging a broken leg. But only the Europeans release them from their hopeless suffering.

On the other hand, a Sahib's dog leads a more than pleasant life. He drives about in a car, or follows his master during the early morning ride, and practically has a servant of his own to wash, feed, and look after him. It is hard to say where servants class the dog of a Sahib—somewhere between themselves and their masters, I should think. I once asked a Hindu bearer what he would like to be in his next incarnation, and was not surprised when he answered, "A Sahib's dog."

Even Mohammedans, who consider dogs unclean, become at times really attached to the

pets of the house. Such was the case with Abdul, a dignitary in his own mosque. He made friends the first day with Judy, my white bull-terrier, who usually loathed natives. Abdul would spend hours playing with her, or industriously removing grass-ticks, rising to his feet with a sheepish grin if one caught him at it.

Then came the night of a big dinner. We were sitting over our port, when Judy rushed out of the house with her usual battle cry. I said something about cats, and we went on with our discussion. Suddenly Abdul appeared in the doorway, his bronze face a grayish yellow, his eyes wide with horror.

"Sahib, Sahib, come quick! Judy Miss Sahib dying in the garden. . . ."

My heart stopped, but somehow I managed to get to her. Judy was stretched out stiff as a poker, slathered in mud and already growing cold. I snatched her up and ran for the house. Just time to give her whiskey before bolting for my car. I passed her to a friend and took the wheel myself. The car howled through the gates, taking the first corner on two wheels,

and heedless of traffic and speed laws, we rushed on to the nearest European Vet.

His diagnosis was not reassuring: "I can't say exactly. Either dislocation of the spinal column, or just poisoning. I'm not much interested in dogs; race-horses are my specialty."

So the poor old dog was given an emetic and put in a hot bath. Both of which should have killed her, as the diagnosis was absolutely wrong. (But bull-terriers don't let you down, till they are quite dead.)

After a hideous night, and no reaction to the treatment, I decided to get a second opinion. There was only one other man who knew anything about dogs—the chief government veterinary, and he did nothing but research work. He loved dogs, however, and took the case out of friendship.

"Fractured head; you should have used ice, but it's too late for that, now. She will be paralyzed till we can dissolve the blood-clot. It must have been a thief in the garden who hit her."

It was a long, up-hill fight. . . . About half

time Abdul took a hand; he appeared one day with a tall bearded man of his own religion.

"This man my church, Sahib. He say prayer that Judy Miss Sahib get well."

Whereupon they squatted down and proceeded to pray earnestly for half an hour. At the end of the ceremony, the visiting priest tied an amulet around her neck, Judy wagged her tail feebly, and Abdul rose beaming. Whether it did any good or not is hard to say; but in any case, from that day on Abdul was convinced she would get well, and she did.

. . . . .

There are two great canine scourges in India; the red mange and rabies. You never know when the latter may break out in the home circle.

We needed a fourth, once, for bridge, so my wife telephoned to an old stand-by.

"Is that you Mr. Langston?"

"Y-e-s-s-" came a nervous voice on the other end of the wire.

"Oh, good morning, Mr. Langston—I just called up to ask you to come to dinner tonight and bridge afterwards."

"Wh—h—y—y—, I—I—I—'d love—e—t—o—o—."

"What's the matter? You seem rather nervous."

"We—l-l-you-s-e-e-e-, one of our d-o-g-g-g-g-s has gone m-a-a-d-d- and I'm perched on t-h-e— t-e-l-e-ph-o-n-e t-a-b-l-e with a loaded p-p-p-i-s-t-o-l waiting for hi-i-m- to a-p-p-p-p-e-a-r-r . . . *Bang*!!! *Bang*!!! It's all right; I got him. Shall I wear a black or white tie tonight?"

Chapter Ten

JUGGERNAUT

A LOVELY WORD—Juggernaut. It has always suggested to me something between a steam-roller and a meat-grinder. So when the American Consul General asked me to go to Puri with him for the festival, I jumped at the chance. I insisted Judy go with us. Alec objected; not from a moral standpoint, but because she had an enthusiastic way of biting people, even those she loved, and he hated all dogs anyway. However, Judy came too.

In the little two-berth stateroom on the train, the lower was naturally ceded to Alec, with the consideration due his years and rank. Judy was bedded down on the floor and I climbed aloft. I was half asleep and dimly aware that Judy was scrambling around, arranging her blanket to suit herself, when my slumbers were brutally interrupted by a sharp query from Alec:—

"Dave, is that dog liable to crawl up on my bed?"

Without thinking, I replied: "Yes, of course. She always sleeps on mine."

"You come right down here and take this berth."

So the sleeping arrangements had to be started all over again with reversed hierarchical order. Anyway, Judy was satisfied, for with a joyful leap she landed on my chest.

Puri is Juggernaut's home town and the whole place is built in the shadow of his temple. It looms enormous over the mud and thatched huts. From a distance it looks not unlike a cathedral with a single tower, but on coming near the resemblance fades. The walls are blotchy gray, a maze of intricate carving, which in the west would be considered obscene; and the tower itself, like all Hindu temples, is phallic in shape.

Juggernaut is an exacting god and his servants are many. Including priests, neophites, fakirs who have attached themselves to the temple, dancing girls, and so on down to the hewers of wood and drawers of water, there are something like eight thousand people.

Juggernaut is the only Hindu god who does not draw the caste line—that is to say, any one, from the sweeper (unclean or unmentionable caste, whose very shadow is defilement to a Brahmin) to the Brahmins themselves, may have free access to the temple. Every year anywhere from a hundred to three hundred thousand pilgrims come to the festival from all over India.

We got in touch with an intelligent Indian commissioner from whom we learned much about this cult not to be found in the guide books. As far as I can make out, the daily ritual in regard to the god is not unlike a small girl playing with a doll. He is waked at dawn by chanting, blowing on conch-shells, and other diabolical noises. Whether he enjoys this or merely suffers it as part of his duty as a national deity I was unable to find out. Then he has his face washed; after that, breakfast. From then on till sundown he is accessible to the populace, with divers interruptions by way of divertissement in the form of nautches, performed by the temple dancing girls. At sundown he is fed again, and from then until the time he retires to rest (depending prob-

The famous Car of Juggernaut

Pilgrims clambering up the sides of the Car of Juggernaut before it is started on its long journey to the sea

ably on the energy of the priests) holds orgies and carousals.

Alec and I wished to make his closer acquaintance, but we were informed that though sweepers might enter, even the late Lord Curzon, when he was Viceroy of India, had been refused admission, so we had to content ourselves with wandering around the town and visiting the gardens of the little temple by the sea. This is joined to the big temple by an enormous avenue about a mile long and over a hundred yards wide. The houses on both sides are of the lightest and meanest construction. Later I discovered that like the one-story houses at Shillong,* and grapenuts, "there is a reason."

The sides of this avenue are lined with a collection of beggars, cripples and fakirs, all of them freaks, any one of whom would make a show-man's fortune. Emancipated, red-eyed Sadus, stark naked but for the ashes smeared over their bodies and their long matted hair; some of them sitting comfortably on beds of spikes, others holding their hands con-

* Shillong is more subject to earthquakes than any other place in India.

tinuously above their heads, so that the flesh is shrunken from long disuse. Lepers in every stage of that dread disease, from the bloated, puffed toes and fingers and furrowing boils, to the noseless, eyeless and even footless cases, who, mewing for alms, thrust at you a little bag strung between the stumps of their arms. Hunchbacks, men without arms, men without legs, blind. Calves with two heads, calves with six legs, two of them growing out of the hump peculiar to Indian cattle. Scores of victims of that dread disease, so prevalent in the district, elephantiasis. Some cases so advanced that the flesh on the leg was not only swollen to an incredible size, but had dropped and entirely covered the foot. One got the impression of an elephant's foot grafted on to a man. Some had it in one leg, some in both—there seemed to be no cure.

We were forbidden entrance to the garden temple, too, although it was not occupied at that time; and again we had to content ourselves with wandering around the grove.

Everything was bustle and confusion in preparation for the festival the next day. By this time the town was a seething, humming

mass of pilgrims. These pilgrimages are run like a Cook's tour. There are men in every town who conduct the yearly pilgrimage. All those who wish to go must pay a fixed sum in advance. The organizer makes all arrangements, food, lodging and travel, even baksheesh to the god, also probably a very handsome profit on the whole business. Woe betide the pilgrim who loses his party at Puri in festival time, for he is cut off from food, friends and funds.

. . . . . .

The next morning at eight o'clock the chief of police called for us. He had found a balcony on the second floor of a house overlooking the square, and with the aid of six parawallahs, a Ford, and a great deal of shouting and swearing, we managed to reach it.

From the balcony, we got our first conception of the immensity of the show. The whole avenue was a crawling, squirming mass of half-naked brown bodies and faces. There must have been a quarter of a million of them —one could hardly hear oneself speak above the terrific throb of countless voices. Most of

them were fairly peaceful, but here and there the inevitable squabble broke out, and then the constabulary took matters in hand. The crowd was squatted on its heels which facilitated the policemen's method of arriving at the scene of trouble. He would hurl himself over the heads of the nearest spectators, like a swimmer plunging into a turbulent sea. Crawling, squirming, even walking on the heads and shoulders of the waiting pilgrims, he eventually arrived at the fracas. A few well administered blows with his club and the trouble was over, and he returned to the side-lines by the same method, half Australian crawl, half subway rush tactics.

Then we saw the cars, three of them, one for Juggernaut, one for his brother, and one for his sister. They were enormous things, not unlike the overgrown float one sees at carnivals. There is a platform built over the wheels and on this the throne of Juggernaut is placed; and over it a huge dome-like roof, heavily decorated with gold and tinsel and flamboyant colors. In the front of the car there are four prancing, white hobby-horses, like the fierce chargers on merry-go-rounds: Their hind legs

are non-existent, for they are built into the car, like a ship's figure-head. These floats take months to make, and with the exception of the wheels and chassis, are re-built every year. Juggernaut evidently believes in the American policy of turning in his old model for a new one and keeping up with the times.

Mrs. Juggernaut was not included in this party, as her husband was on pleasure bent.

The reason or local tradition of this early visit to the garden temple is as follows:

One morning towards spring, Juggernaut comes down to breakfast and announces that he is suffering from a heavy cold, and thinks a little sea air would do him good. In fact, he proposes to go down to the garden temple for three or four days, accompanied by his brother and sister. Mrs. Juggernaut demurs, but finally consents, the cars are ordered, and off he starts. His own chariot, some fifteen feet high, has fourteen wheels, seven on a side, placed *en échelon*. His sister's and brother's rank twelve and ten wheels respectively.

We suddenly noticed a great commotion going on at the gate of the temple and presently an enormous head, jet black, with huge white

eyes and crimson mouth, came forth carried on a litter by a dozen or so priests. The litter bearers bent their knees as they took a forward step, so that the head bobbed and bowed, like royalty acknowledging the acclamation of its people, on its way to the waiting chariot.

The roar of the crowd became deafening, and when Juggernaut was finally installed in his car, there was a general surge forward. Apparently the whole two hundred and fifty thousand pilgrims wanted to climb on the platform of the car at the same time. The police beat them off, but nothing discouraged them; they merely tried from another side of the car.

One man made seven tries. I was amazed at his perseverance until the Chief of Police explained the rules of the game: once the God is installed on his car, any pilgrim who touches his face, obtains total annihilation on leaving this earth and therefore exemption from any further reincarnation and penance. The women contented themselves by kissing the four enormous cables stretched out in front which is supposed to ensure a male child.

Next came the brother and sister, but ap-

parently from the coolness of their reception, they had no right to grant any special dispensations. It took over an hour for the three of them to take their places. Then the crowd seized the ropes and the triumphal procession began.

The huge wooden beam, acting as brake before the wheels, is there by police ordinance. It was hoisted up, and a rhythmic chant came from the crowd. The wheels creaked and the cars rumbled slowly forward. The Gods themselves were accompanied by a retinue of priests, to administer to their needs and desires during the trip. Four of these climbed onto the grotesque hobby-horses, flogging their mounts as if urging them to greater speed in the most approved postillion manner. Others were blowing on conch shells, ringing gongs, and tending the incense burner before the God. Several of them, stark naked, made vulgar gestures and took obscene postures while passing a balcony where they caught sight of some European women. The Consul looked at the Chief of Police inquiringly—who shrugged his shoulders, explaining that in a big festival of this sort ordinary regulations were off. If

women wanted to see it, they must take the risk of being shocked.

Besides the priests on the upper platform, there was a swarming, crawling mass of natives, perched on any foothold of the car and axles, fighting among themselves to maintain a point of vantage. I began to understand why, in spite of all police precautions, there are always a few casualties. This year there were six. Contrary to the general belief, throwing oneself under the Juggernaut car to obtain merit, was never part of the ritual. The British have always been credited with putting a stop to this heathen practice, and one felt that before their advent, the car rolled forward on a squelching bed of flesh and bones; and later, one imagined benevolent British troops preventing, at the point of the bayonet, the benighted heathen from hurling themselves to destruction. I strongly suspect that both these impressions were derived from early missionaries who, for the purpose of propaganda, exaggerated the usual accidental casualties in their lectures at home.

The cars rolled on, and this year, an auspicious sign, they continued straight on their

course. This was doubly fortunate: it augured a bountiful year, and also greatly relieved the minds of the householders along the avenue. For if the car of Juggernaut diverges from the road, on no account may it be pulled backwards in order to turn it. Every effort is made to swing it around into its course again, but should it touch a house, the house must be torn down and the car dragged over its ruins.

Finally the garden temple was reached, and there Juggernaut descended for his rest by the sea, and the whole of Puri, pilgrims and all, gave themselves up to feasting and rejoicing.

We two white pilgrims did not get much sleep that night and when we discovered that the God would not return to the main temple for two or three days, and that the pandemonium was sure to continue, if not increase, we decided to return to Calcutta.

I am sorry now we did not stay, for Juggernaut's home-coming is even more whimsical than his departure. On returning to the temple gate, he knocks at the door and asks Mrs. Juggernaut to open. Mrs. Juggernaut, who is only about a foot high, then appears at a little shuttered window, and announces that she is

not at all sure she wants him back; that she has heard tell of goings on at that there garden temple, and she would like to have another night to sleep on her decision as to whether to take him back or not. So he'd better make himself comfortable in his car for the night. This is really an excuse for the priests not to take on the arduous labors of re-installing him the same day as the return procession.

The next day, bright and early, Juggernaut craves admission once more and if Mrs. Juggernaut's decision is favorable—and it always is—he is re-installed in fitting majesty, the daily ritual begins again and the town empties of pilgrims for another year.

Chapter Eleven

ONCE UPON A TIME

DI AND I, and of course Judy, climbed into a compartment for four. We had bribed the local platform superintendent to keep other people out, and settled down feeling sure of having the carriage to ourselves until the next big station. After that one never knew. Europeans, seeing a compartment occupied by a man and wife, will try to find accommodations elsewhere. Not so the Babu-gentlemen travelling first class, probably for the first time. They take a delight in claiming the vacant bunks. If they insist, the only thing to be done is for the woman to go to the compartment reserved for ladies. There are various unofficial ways of dissuading the Babus, however—a bull-terrier, for instance.

Tableau: A railway station at night. A mail train draws into the platform and the waiting horde rushes hither and thither to find places. The night is made ugly by the cries of native

refreshment vendors. "Soida—Limolade—burruf! (soda—lemonade—ice) *Hindu log pani* (water for Hindu folks)—*Dood Ghurrum-ghurrum* (hot milk, hot)."

Two Europeans approach the door of a compartment. One of them looks in and turns to his companion:—

"Come along, Billy, we'll find quarters further down the line—there's a Sahib and his wife in there."

Four more repeat the performance without a word from the occupants. Then along come two Babu-gentlemen talking volubly in English:—"Come along, man, I think there is plenty of room here."

The other one pokes his head inside:—"Oh yes, the upper bunks are free. There are only a man and wife in possession."

The male occupant says nothing, but loosens his grip on the white bull-terrier's collar. There is a blood-curdling roar as the dog hurls herself at the window. The Babus fall back in consternation at sight of a white devil framed in the dimly lighted square.

"Compartment seems somewhat crowded. We shall seek elsewhere."

They scuttle down the line and hurl themselves, bags and bundles, into a compartment of their own countrymen.

A chuckle from the white man, a deep sigh of duty well performed from the dog—and peace reigns once more.

At Delhi we transferred to a little local train for Agra. It was a terrible disappointment, Agra, as we saw it first, with its ramshackle houses, dust-coated foliage, deserted, sun-baked roads. A wheezy Ford tied up with string jounced us to the North-Western hotel, as the good hotel was closed for the season. The room we had was bare, dark and dingy. Meals were uneatable, and to make things more cheerful, we were warned to be ready to go to the Fort, if we heard the alarm-gun fired during the night. (The Gandhi riots were on and the commanding officer expected trouble.)

Judy was the only one who really enjoyed herself in that hotel, for the trees in the compound were swarming with chipmunks, and she spent her time chasing them. She would hide for hours behind a pillar of the verandah waiting for one to come to earth; then there would be a mad dash, a bark, and a miniature

dust storm, with the only result a volley of scolding chatter from the tree. She never caught one, but she never lost hope—the game went on from sunrise till nightfall.

Of course the lode-star of Agra is the Taj-Mahal, and I am glad that we were strong-minded enough to wait for a moonlight night to see it. In the meantime we wandered around the old fort, far more interesting than the one at Delhi. The Jasmin tower, with its exquisite carved pillars, the intricate traceries of its marble floor, and the dreamy view across the river, is alone worth the journey to Agra.

More prosaic but still interesting is Weyland's carpet factory. Here, on hand looms, they still weave rugs as in the old days, even the famous Lantern design (400 stitches to the square inch)—exact replicas of the original now in the South Kensington Museum. The colors are perhaps not so faded, but time will remedy this, for they use only vegetable dyes. In front of each loom was a row of small boys, tying the threads with the right hand and cutting them with the left. Children must be used for this work, as grown fingers are too large to pass between the threads. To

avoid mistakes an old craftsman, seated back of the loom, reads aloud from a pattern: "Two red—one yellow—three black—" The childish chorus repeats it. Sufficient time is allowed for the tying of the knot and the reader goes on. . . .

. . . . . .

Not far from Agra sleeps the old deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri, the city which Akbar built to outshine Delhi.

To me it had always been a dream of vast and glorious splendour—a thousand faceted jewel—the crown of the Mogul Empire. I had seen the counsel chamber—a magic hall, and Akbar seated on his aerial throne above the centre of the room—in each corner an alcove linked to the seat of power by a flying bridge, and from each alcove the princely champion of one of the four great creeds unfolding his faith. The throne had been high above the rabble of the court—the hall of infinite size and magnificence, the bridges far flung, delicate curves.

All this I had seen and more—such is the power of a child's imagination. . . .

My awakening was sad—the counsel hall was a small, low room not more than twenty feet square; the bridges were short, flat and ugly.

Throughout the whole abandoned city the red stone buildings had been destroyed by time, and most of the carvings defaced or mutilated. In the midst of all this dreary red stone, the marble Mosque gleamed like milk-white jade. As it is the resting place of the bones of the saint Sikri, it is still frequented by pilgrims. The marble floors are polished by the reverent feet of thousands of worshipers who come there yearly. The tomb itself is enclosed in a filigree screen of carved marble. Countless little ribbons and rags are tied to the carving—pathetic reminders to the saint lest he forget the supplicants.

On our way back to the car, a slight movement on a crumbling window-ledge caught my eye. There, basking in the sun, were two Russell's vipers. I did not kill them, for somehow they seemed to have more right to this city of the dead than I. Perhaps they were the reincarnations of some wily Brahmin priests, or crafty Mohammedan viziers.

The Taj Mahal and sacred River Jumna

Simla, the summer capital of India

THE TAJ MAHAL

THERE was no sign of a moon when we started, but the stars were so bright that the sky took on a deep, velvety blue and the white road showed up plainly. Mysterious perfumes drifted through the night as the car hummed along—incense from a temple, the smell of burning wood, and the faint, haunting odor of jasmine, like a woman's ghost, wandering through the dark. No wonder people call it "My Lady of the Night."

A huge black silhouette blotted out the heavens—the entrance to the gardens of the Taj Mahal. As one looked up, it loomed like some great Babylonian sallyport. The two gigantic doors were studded, ten feet from the ground, with long bronze spikes—a precaution in olden times against elephants used as battering-rams.

At first there seemed no way of entering, nor any hope of making the guardians hear us through the massive wooden portals; but by dint of hammering and shouting, some one within was finally roused. With a sound of grinding bolts the doors swung open. One had

the feeling that the gates of the centuries were rolling back. A dim white figure beckoned. No word was spoken, for he knew why we had come, and like a familiar spirit, he fulfilled his office silently.

Once through the enormous arch of the gate, the Taj Mahal itself was visible. The beauty of it choked me. It looked so unobtainable—so infinitely remote—so like a minute ivory carving at the end of the gleaming water gardens, and the double rows of sad cypress sentinels. Under the impressive shadow of the elephant gate, the four minarets might have been elfin candles, but half way down the marble paths of the water garden, the white dome of the Taj increased fivefold, as if by magic. I turned to see if the elephant gate were as large as ever—by the same magic, it had dwindled in proportion. In the shadow of the white building, the four minarets took on the proportion of rugged lighthouses, yet the only light to be seen was a prayer lamp in the Taj itself, shining dimly through the open doors.

Once inside, our guide stopped, and without warning intoned a Moslem prayer.

"Allah il Allah Mahmout razoul il Allah"

. . . One could almost see the sound as it reverberated around the marble halls, coming to rest at the very top of the dome, as though ten centuries of long forgotten prayers were responding in a ghostly choir. He led the way to the crypt below, where its creator, and the woman for whom he built it, sleep under simple marble tablets, half-hidden by a covering of rose petals—the tribute of all who come. Perhaps it is the beauty of the place or the atmosphere, or merely the perfume of the roses, but in any case, after a few minutes one's senses reel. . . .

As we left, the moon glided from behind a cloud and the dream in marble turned to silver. Still in a trance we drifted through the wistful water gardens, and through the black portals of the elephant gate to the dust road beyond, dead white under the rising moon. The hum of the engine as we left seemed sacrilege, but over and above it I heard the echo of the incantation. The perfume of the faded rose leaves haunted me for days.

Chapter Twelve

SIMLA

At Kalka you leave the standard-gauge train for a little mountain railway up to Simla. If you can afford to, it is far more pleasant to take the motor-rail, a char-a-banc truck driven by a gasoline engine. Also, if you think of it, telegraph ahead to the station master and reserve a front seat, for the view is worth the trouble.

I had bespoken the two seats beside the driver, but just as we were settling down, with Judy between us, an officious looking European dashed up to the station master. He expostulated fussily, evidently exacting some little official privilege as though his life depended on it. The station master, a decent sort of chap, protested mildly, as one does when opposing red tape with reason, but finally he gave it up and came towards me.

"Sorry, Sir, but that gentleman over there claims one of the front seats. I know you tele-

graphed ahead, Sir, but the other gentleman is an official, one of the Viceroy's secretaries, and as such can exact the seat."

"But surely, station master, he has been up hundreds of times before? !!!"

"I know, Sir, but it's one of their privileges and they are very jealous of them."

There was nothing more to be said or done, so the official climbed in beside my wife, and Judy and I retired to the seat behind. Judy, however, took it into her head to climb over and talk to Di, and I did nothing to restrain her, in spite of snorts of annoyance from the man in front. Half way up it was much colder, and Judy began to sneeze down his neck. We were full of concern for her comfort, and carefully put a coat on her, but I saw no reason to prevent her sneezing in any direction she chose. By the time we reached Simla, the official was in a towering rage, and Di and I were thoroughly pleased with life in general and a certain white bull-terrier in particular.

For life in Simla, read Kipling. It has not changed since his day. The same round of official and private gaieties; the same houses perched on the edge of a ravine; the same

group of shivering, coughing, blanket-draped rickshaw-men waiting for their masters outside hotels and clubs. Viceroys may come and go, but the official life flows on unchanged. The surrounding mountains are not so impressive as those at Darjeeling, but are more often on view; and in September Simla has a climate like our Indian summer at home, brilliant, crisp, sunlit days and sharp, frosty nights.

. . . . .

Never, if you can possibly help it, get into one of those spiteful affairs they call a rickshaw. The Indian rickshaw, barring the fact that it has two wheels, in no way resembles the Japanese vehicle. It is heavy and coach-built, rather like a small pony-shay, but instead of shafts it has a pole with a cross-bar. Two men pull in front and two push behind. For long trips an extra crew trots behind and relieves the first four at regular intervals. The relieving *chimpanee* (rickshaw-man) draws abreast of the one he is replacing. At a given signal he grabs the bar, taking up the burden without breaking his stride, as the other one lets go and jumps clear. Occasionally a chimpanee

stumbles, bringing his mates down with him, and when this happens, the occupant is likely to be catapulted into the valley below. This sort of thing happens too often to be pleasant, for the chimpanees insist on wearing puttees which are forever coming undone and tripping them up. Judy lent further zest to rickshaw riding by running just ahead of them, and turning to bark at them from time to time.

Apart from rickshaws and landslides there is another joy to be reckoned with in Simla monkeys. They are of the Hanuman type, with black faces and white Flannigan fringe whiskers, and enormously long sleek tails. They travel around the countryside in bands, usually swinging from tree to tree, but occasionally they take to the corrugated iron roofs of the houses. The noise they make then is infernal, but there is little to be done about it as no one likes to shoot them. My sister-in-law was sitting by her tea-table one day, awaiting some friends, when suddenly an uninvited guest swung through the window. Knowing what havoc they cause, she threw a tea-cup at it, but instead of fleeing it advanced, snarling at her. Although these monkeys are not very

big, when thoroughly roused they look formidable. She rushed to the nearest door, but before she could get out, Jocko had reached the laden tea-table and started the bombardment. He pelted her with cakes, buns, tea-cups and saucers—her dress and the room were ruined. The episode ended abruptly when he tried to hurl the boiling tea-kettle at her. The intruder retired, forthwith, to a tree-top, to nurse his burns and tell his friends all about it.

. . . . .

In Simla last but not least is Khuda-Bux, the famous fortune-teller. Legend has it that he has pronounced miracles of prophecy in the past. Very much in the past, in fact, for he produces letters of recommendation as far back as the time when Lord Roberts was a young lieutenant. This, his youthful appearance, and the bungle he made of my early life, led me to suspect that this was not the original Khuda-Bux. Apparently there are others in India than servants who inherit not only their fathers' names and professions, but also their references. The original fortune-teller had been uncannily good in his prognostications,

so trying to emulate his ancestor, Khuda-Bux the second or third was tireless in his efforts. He wheedled and cajoled me, and even became dictatorial:—

"I tell you, Sahib, you shall become entitled."

My Yankee blood rose in protest.

"Titles do not exist in my country, Khuda-Bux. Even if bestowed by a foreign nation, we don't use them."

"Sahib, I insist you shall become entitled. You shall be Lord Sahib, or even Baronet Sahib."

He stuck to his point for a long time, but eventually compromised on the optional honor of being stabbed during a future riot in Calcutta.

Chapter Thirteen

THE PASSING SHOW

THE MARWARI merchants in Calcutta, occasionally give parties to Europeans in their garden houses beyond the Diamond Harbour Road. These evenings are a strange mixture of western and eastern customs. The dinner is usually supplied, from hors d'oeuvres to coffee, by a European caterer, and served on a white cloth with hired silver and glass. Here the western side ends. Though more than hospitable, your host, while sitting at table with you, refuses to touch a crumb of bread or a glass of water. If a high caste Hindu visits you, he will refuse any refreshment in your house, and should he thirst during the visit, he will go and drink from a filthy gourd at the cottage of the gardener, who is of his own cult. In spite of this Borgia-like reticence on the part of your host, these dinners are usually quite cheerful, with excellent food and lashings of champagne.

After dinner the classic entertainment is a Nautch dance. For those who are initiated and speak the language, these Nautch dances are said to be gems of grace, wit, and melody, but they are somewhat difficult for a newcomer to appreciate. In the first place, by the time a dancer has acquired a sufficient repertoire in singing and the necessary grace in dancing, she closely resembles a hag. One hears tales of graceful swaying Houris, with gazelle-like eyes and slender limbs, that hypnotize in a melody of motion; of newly arrived subalterns crashing forward on their faces in an agony of love, amidst the wail of strange instruments and the scent of thought-confusing perfumes and oriental incense. Such is the Nautch dance in fiction. . . .

The company is gathered in a small room filled with European atrocities. Chairs are placed around the edge and the fat Burra-Sahibs and the thin Chota-Sahibs sit, smoking their cigars, and drinking their final glass of brandy. The host beams on them and announces that the Nautch girl has arrived. Three miserable looking musicians file into the room and squat on the floor. One of them has

a large drum, another a huge zither, and the third a waily pipe, which they proceed to torture earnestly. But make no mistake—this is not tuning up, but a very serious and necessary prelude.

Then the Nautch girl appears. From head to foot she is tightly encased in tunic and trousers, and a large bell skirt hangs down to her knees. On each wrist and ankle is a little string of bells and she is followed by a youthful retainer carrying a large silver spittoon. For a moment she hesitates, looking the company over, and apparently waiting for a cue in the music. During this time she never ceases to chew betel-nut, obviously and noisily. Suddenly she stiffens and strikes an attitude. The small attendant rushes up to her. With the accuracy of a bar-room loafer she spits into the silver cuspidor, and the dance begins.

There is not a great deal of movement in a Nautch. It consists mainly of pointing one toe, then the other, stretching out the arms, and raising first one and then the other arch-painted eyebrow. All this is accompanied by a song which she sings over and over again. It sounds very monotonous and even if one could

understand the words, the effect would be spoilt by the frequent recourse to the spittoon.

The host translates as the dance goes on:

"You see, now she sing about the girl who go down to river to fill water-bottle. Her papa say, 'Be careful, the God Krishna is there.' She go and the God Krishna get her. At least she tell her papa it was the God Krishna."

So it goes on for hours till the dance finally comes to a stop, and the weary guests depart vowing, once more, never to endure another Nautch.

. . . . .

There were several Indians at the first Marwari party I went to, and all evening they smoked hubble-bubble pipes. Their tobacco had a peculiar smell, and I noticed that they were getting drowsier and drowsier. It was not opium, but it was certainly some other kind of drug, and possessed by curiosity, I asked my host what it might be.

"That? Oh, that is what we call *bhang*. It is a sort of preparation of hemp which we smoke mixed with tobacco."

"So I gathered from the aroma. But what effect does it have?"

"Oh, most salubrious. Will you try it?"

I have always gone on the principle of "try anything once," so a pipe was made ready and I puffed away industriously. The effect was disappointing and the taste extremely unpleasant. Having started, however, I determined to go on, so another pipe was prepared under the protest of my host:

"Have a care, Sahib, you shall take harm if you should smoke so quickly!"

He was right. Already I was beginning to feel dizzy. The drive home through the cool night air steadied me a bit, but I thought with dread of the three flights of stairs leading to the flat on Chowringhee, that I was sharing with a man.

Half way up the first flight, I put my hand on the banister to steady myself, and the hand disappeared. With a supreme effort I pulled myself together and took a step upwards, unfortunately, at the same time looking down to reassure myself that at least my feet were there. Then I sat down and wept bitterly, for my right foot had vanished into thin air and,

even as I looked, was followed by the left. Doggedly, step by step, I groped my way upstairs on all fours, convinced that I was climbing on the stumps of what had been hands and feet.

Once in my room, I crawled onto the bed and wept again, overcome by self-pity. The full tragedy of my plight came home to me. My roommate was away, so I must sleep fully clothed, for how could a man without hands undress himself? By this time I was in a cold sweat; the bed was making lunges hither and thither across the room and I was in mortal terror of being hurled out of the window. Indeed, on waking, I was sorry that I had not been, for my head felt as if someone had bungled a blow with a meat-axe, and the daylight seared my eyes like a hot poker. My friend on his return was not sympathetic, but at least he cleared up the mystery of the disappearing extremities.

"You see, old man, hemp is a most perneecious drug. Smoked in small quantities, it is not exactly disagreeable, creating a somewhat pleasant state of inebriation. But if overindulged in—and laddie, I'm afraid you must

have smoked an awfu' lot—it paralyzes the retina of the eye, so that the pupil remains fixed, just opposite the optic nerve, sometimes called the blind-spot. For this reason, if you concentrate on anything at a certain distance, to be exact, the focal length of the cornea at the time of paralysis, the object disappears entirely. Poor laddie, you must have had an awfu' frecht!" He grinned sardonically. "I remember well the first time I tried it mysel'. "

I smiled sheepishly and decided that once was enough.

CALCUTTA TRAFFIC

In spite of driving a car for three years, my Calcutta license was unblemished—extraordinary luck, with such varied and eccentric traffic. The variety embraces everything from a slow-moving, swaggle-tailed bullock-cart to a sixty horsepower Rolls-Royce. And as for eccentricity, who can tell what a Sikh taxi-wallah or an office-gharri driver will do next.

Office-gharris, by the way, are rolling death traps, narrow, high built, with sliding doors on both sides,—something between a miniature

hearse and a palanquin. As their front wheels are cut under, they can turn in their own length, provided they don't turn over. The driver is perched on a seat on the roof, and what he gains in view by his elevated position, he loses in control of the horse. Clutching the reins in one hand he flogs the poor beast into a gallop, and when they are well under way, grabs a rein in each hand, holding them up about level with his ears. Should he wish to turn to the left, he pulls so hard on the left rein that the obliging horse tries to swing round completely. A wicked yank on the right corrects this mistaken idea, and sawing away, first with one hand and then with the other, they continue their zig-zag course down the street until the European within calls out to stop. *Roko*! shrills the small syce behind. *Roko*! repeats the driver, like the helmsman of a ship, and the unfortunate horse, having been yanked back almost on its hind quarters, gathers that further progress is temporarily unnecessary.

The bullock carts are more or less harmless, except at night on an unlighted road, when they possess all the dangers of a hidden reef.

The worst menace of all, though, is the taxi-cab,—ramshackle Oaklands and Chevrolets, driven by half-crazy Sikhs. They cruise along at breakneck speed looking for fares. If you hail one, he will stop short with a grinding of brakes, oblivious to anything behind. Or, worse still, if you happen to be across the street he will spin around on two wheels with never a warning signal. There are accidents morning, noon and night—but what is to be done? Fine them—yes; but that does not pay for damages to your own car. Sue them—vain hope; most of them own their own taxis, and nothing else. You curse them, you give their number to the policeman, and go your way, relying on your insurance company to make good. And the Sikh, having tied up his damaged mud-guard, or whatever else it may be, with yet another bit of string,* starts off once more, unabashed, at the same joyous speed.

There was racing at Tolly-Gunge. We had started late to avoid the stream of taxis, and as a result, we met the whole pack of them racing back to collect a second fare. Down the road

* All repairs in India are made with string. So much so that the taxis look like cat's cradles.

they came, beards flying, white teeth gleaming in their excitement—three abreast, four wheels, no brakes. I took the ditch, livid with rage. As there were no police in sight, I collected a healthy pile of stones in the bottom of the car. Then standing up in the tonneau, a rock in each hand, I told the driver to start. As the next lot of taxis roared down on us, I waved them over to their own side of the road. They came on, blind to all warnings, so I started my bombing. I got a radiator and two head-lights before they pulled up; when there was a bit of an argument. It was a good scheme, however, for we reached Tolly-Gunge with only one bent mud-guard.

One of the high court judges had something to say to me on the subject of taking the law into my own hands; but from then on, the road was policed on race days.

MOTORING IN INDIA

Whatever you do go slowly through the villages around Calcutta. The inhabitants of some of them have a carefully worked out system of disposing of their rich but blind or

crippled relatives. Pickets are posted down the road who give due warning of the approach of any opulent looking car. Grandpa is then coaxed to his feet and at the auspicious moment is called, inveigled, or pushed into the middle of the road. If it is a really successful accident, his relations not only inherit his possessions, but also collect much *baksheesh* from the unsuspecting motorist.

On New Year's Day my wife and I were giving a luncheon at the race course. As we particularly wanted to be there early, naturally, the car went phut. I got a mechanic from the garage, and we tinkered and fussed, but our combined efforts only succeeded in persuading three cylinders to work. It was getting late so off we started, making the best possible time on the three. The road was practically empty and we hardly saw a soul, but as we neared the course, an old native on the other side of the road caught my eye. There was nothing extraordinary about him save that he seemed infirm and was being led and supported by two young men, evidently relations. We had just passed him when there came a bump at the side of the car and something fell

with a thud on the road. I stopped and, to my horror, found the old man in a crumpled heap beside the rear wheels. The cries of his companions instantly attracted a crowd in that heretofore deserted highway, all shrieking like jackdaws, and not a policeman in sight.

The old man was badly hurt. He had evidently hurled himself across the road, and bounced off the rear mud-guard.

Another car pulled up behind us and the owner jumped out.

"I saw the whole thing. My name is House. If you have any trouble I will testify it was not your fault. Don't call on me, though, unless you have to, for I'm a doctor, and I've got my hands full with this grippe epidemic."

Then he took a look at the injured man, who by this time was being violently sick.

"Better get him to the hospital—looks like a bad case of concussion. I'll take your Mem-Sahib on to the races for you."

And off they went.

But now, the old man's nephews, for as such they declared themselves, believing their uncle to be dying, refused to touch him. I finally found some coolies of the pariah class, so low

they had no caste to break. These I engaged to lift the old man into the back of the car and to hold him during the ride. The nephews clambered onto the running-board and demanded *baksheesh* and damages all the way to the hospital. There I paid the hospital entrance fee and then, turning to the still clamoring nephews, said casually:—

"Now then, you two, come along to the police station with me. We are going to make a report."

As if by magic the two brothers faded out of the picture.

Formalities over, I returned to the race course. Luncheon was finished, but I was so glad to reach the sanctuary of the paddock without further misadventures, that I did not complain.

The next day Joylall, as the old man was called, died; and three days later, came the coroner's inquest. The mechanic from the garage was ill, the two nephews had disappeared completely, and the doctor was only to be called on in case of necessity.

"Now, Mr. King, as you seem to be the only

witness, will you tell us exactly what happened?"

I told him all I knew of the accident.

"Was the road crowded?"

"No. There was plenty of room along the side to have dodged him, had I seen him."

Further questions, and then the hospital-Babu was called up.

He read his report in the sing-song voice of all Babus, never once stopping for breath.

"Joylall was admitted to hospital on the first instant. He was suffering from a fractured cranium, also other severe bruises, including concussion. He have died on morning of the second."

Then came further gruesome details.

"Is that all, Babu?"

"Yis, your Honor," the Babu grinned, and then caught sight of something on the other side of the page.

"Oh no, your Honor! I forgot. Deceased was also suffering from cataracts in both eyes, rendering him totally blind."

The coroner's face cleared.

"This last phase, gentlemen, explains a lot. I am afraid it is another case of getting blind

men to run in front of motor-cars. This Joylall was a land-owner and his nephews were probably in a hurry to inherit. I think we can exonerate Mr. King. Sergeant, issue two warrants for those nephews."

There is an Indian superstition that anything unusual that happens on New Year's Day will repeat itself throughout the year. Fortunately, in my case it was not fulfilled.

Chapter Fourteen

SNAKES, FLOODS AND OTHER ACTS OF GOD

About two days' steamboat journey up the Hooghli from Calcutta is a region called the Sunderbunds. Some of these jungle-covered islands are a hunter's paradise, in spite of fever, mosquitoes, and other drawbacks. They tell a tale of one of them that is almost ludicrous. It seems that the pilot service has to land there, off and on, to inspect or correct the river navigation signals. Unfortunately, at some time or other two or three tigers swam across to it from the mainland, probably following a deer. Anyway, they increased and multiplied and game on the island decreased proportionately. These tigers have now become so starved and savage that no native in the pilot service will go ashore until the brush has been swept by shells from the three-punder launch.

Whether this is gospel truth or not is neither here nor there, but in any case, it was to the Sunderbunds that Angus, my old bungalow mate—yes, the lecturer on hemp smoking—and a friend of his went on a week's hunting trip.

As they were looking for tigers, naturally they never saw one. However, the day before they started home they found an enormous python, twenty-seven feet long, but lately gorged and very logey. They were about to shoot it when Angus remembered having seen a tribe of snake-catchers a few miles back. Leaving his friend to keep the python company, he returned to the snake-catchers' encampment and told them of his find. He collected two volunteers and started back at the double.

The python was still dozing comfortably, but this state of bliss was short-lived. One of the snake-men made a dive at its tail, holding it up so that at least a third of its length was off the ground. The snake came out of its torpor and began lashing around, trying to reach backwards and strike. But the native knew his business, and though he was waltzed about

by the end of the tail, he never let it touch the ground.*

The fight continued, but little by little the python's head was worked towards a tree. Then with one bound the other native sprang, and clamping the head of the reptile against the tree-trunk with his legs, he proceeded to to tie it to the tree with his turban cloth. Next, he took an enormous gunny-sack they had brought with them, and he and his mate began to force the snake into the sack, inch by inch, folding it like a pocket-rule. This accomplished, the whole party returned to the snake-catchers' camp.

These snake-catchers are strange people, living on boats and haunting the snake-infested regions. They eke out a scanty living by catching reptiles of all sorts; cobras for the government bounty of a rupee per head, besides the poison they sell to medical laboratories; other species to sell to zoological gardens, or for the skins. Angus asked to see a hamadryad, whereupon a small girl went on board their boat and brought back a basket.

* Python is of the constrictor family, and unless its tail is on the ground or anchored to a tree, it cannot crush its prey.

Opening the top, she plunged in her hand and dragged out a King-cobra, alive and with its poison fangs undrawn. She held it up for approval but never relinquished her original grip, just back of its head till the brute was safely shut up in the basket.

A box was made for the python, and Angus and his friend departed, with four natives carrying their newly acquired pet.

Charlie, as they had christened him, behaved beautifully until the second day on the steamer. By that time he had fully digested his meal, and feeling restless, stretched himself. The box creaked and bulged, and nails began to fly. When the other passengers learned what was in it, they became greatly agitated, and were all for throwing the box and its inmate overboard. Angus however, insisted upon keeping Charlie, so a compromise was made of tying up the crate with yards of rope. Back in Calcutta, he parked Charlie in the box-room of his flat and promptly forgot all about him.

Two days later, Mrs. Angus came down from the hills. Going into the box-room, she was much annoyed to hear a rustling and creaking

from a stoutly roped case, and complained to her husband:

"Angus, you really must do something. I'm sure there are rats in that room. Whatever have you got in that huge case?"

"Oh, my stars!! I forgot all about the big snake. Did I not tell ye about it? I must take him to the zoo."

There and then he did so, in a taxi, for Mrs. Jim was not in the least amused at the idea of a twenty-seven foot python in a flat where small inquisitive nieces and nephews were running in and out all day.

If you go to the Calcutta Zoological Gardens, you can still see Charlie. But he is now called "Rock Python—Habitat, etc. . . . — Presented by J.A.M."

. . . . .

The muddy waters of the Hooghli turn to golden brown in the brilliant light of noon. They slide silently along, giving no hint of the sinister force beneath the greasy surface. But then—the Hooghli is deceptive, and woe to even the stoutest of ships should she strand or founder while in its power. Below those

placid dimples on the flood's brown expanse race hidden currents, so swift and hungry that even ribs of steel are racked and scattered within the hour. The river bed is an ever-shifting maze and the channel varies daily. The pilots watch it as they would a dangerous maniac. Every move is reported to the Pilot Service, every rise and fall of its waters fathomed, and announced. The fight between dredgers and shifting sands never stops; for with all its wanton, ungovernable force, the Hooghli is the long, twisted link between Calcutta and the sea.

Since Calcutta is largely built on swamp land reclaimed from the river, the drainage system is neither very deep nor very effective; in fact, at certain hours of the day the drains are flooded by the tide. If, at the same time, there is a heavy rainfall, the gutters are soon choked, and the city is flooded.

Tropical rain falls like a cloudburst, and soon the streets are two or three feet deep in water. Automobiles gurgle, sputter, and stop, and the horse-drawn gharris come into their own. They plow through the rising flood till the men inside put up their feet to keep them

out of the water swirling around in the bottom of the carriage. The small *syce*, who usually rides behind, takes refuge on the roof of the gharri and chatters at the driver, for all the world like a half-drowned monkey. The steady splashing of the horses' hooves sounds like the chugging of a paddle-steamer, plouf . . . plouf . . . plouf. Past stranded cars, the owners marooned and signalling wildly to be taken off, past trams and motorcycles, on they go, the only vehicles still moving. They overhaul ox-carts, almost submerged, and pedestrians wading doggedly through the streams. The Babus are the only ones who seem unmoved. For though half-drowned, up to their chests in water, with their precious shoes hung round their necks, they still hold their umbrellas at the correct angle. "In time of rain man should elevate umbrella to avoid undue moisture—floods and other acts of God notwithstanding." Arrived at one's bungalow, there comes the question of getting from the *gharri* to the house. Some wade, regardless of shoes and clothes, some divest themselves in the *gharri* and swim for it in their B.V.D.s. But you may depend on it that the Burra-

Sahibs are ferried in state to their very doors on the shoulders of their retainers.

As a rule the floods are treated as a huge joke, but now and then they are really inconvenient. Out beyond Bally-Gunge were a lot of new bungalows; solid enough under ordinary circumstance, but built on sandy foundations. One night the rain fell, and the waters rose, and the houses built upon the sand trembled. So did the inhabitants, but what could they do, cut off as they were from the rest of the world?

The next morning, the floods rose higher and we on Lower Circular Road saw a strange sight. Floating down the road came a large tin bath-tub, in which was seated a woman and her child. The craft was being pushed along by the proud, puffing male parent, as he swam behind it.

But, if human beings did not take the flood seriously, the animals did. Frogs plopped into drawing rooms, cats took to the trees, and dogs had a magnificent time, swimming out to do battle with rats stranded on bushes in the submerged gardens.

When the waters recede, which they generally do in a day or two, various ditches and

pools they leave behind are alive with little fish, an inch to three inches long. No one has ever proved how they get there, being miles from any tank or river. Some people think they lie buried in the mud, coming to the surface during the floods. Others put it down to precipitated incubation. Once seen, however, it is easy to believe the stories of "raining fishes."

. . . . .

There was something queer about the night. Not a jackal gave tongue, and for once even the cicadas were still, though there was not a cloud in the Indian sky.

Inside the bungalow I slept uneasily, possessed by my dreams. From another world I was still faintly aware of the heavy electric fan over my head droning like an enormous bumble-bee, and of Judy on the chair beside me whining softly to herself. There was a slight tremor—then another—and another, until the whole bungalow was vibrating. The heavy iron bars across the shutters leapt from their catches and clanged against the wall like bell-buoys. Even this did not rouse me—I was

held by strange dreams. A bombardment at the front . . . a bombing plane overhead. . . . Suddenly it switched to the Tokyo fire and earthquake and a friend who I knew had been there at the time.

By this time Judy was frantic—barking and scratching at my chest. The dream changed again, and for some reason Judy was attacking my friend in Tokyo. But the barking finally penetrated my conscious memory and still half asleep I tried to quiet her.

"Shut up, Judy. There are no cats."

As though in answer came a shout from the garden, where the other men of the house had scuttled for safety.

"Wake up, you fool, and come out. The dog's got more sense than you. It's an earthquake!"

With a bound I was on my feet and fully awake. Judy, after looking round to make sure I was following, led the way out with an air of smug superiority, as though she were saying:

"There! you see? This is the thing to do in an earthquake!"

Doors were swinging back and forth, like

those of a ship in a sea-way. A heavy sofa in the drawing room was sliding to and fro across the marble floors as if pushed by unseen hands. A minute later it was over—jackal howled, the cicadas began again their everlasting chirping. We went back to our rooms, but I had to bunk down on a sofa, for my bed had been wrecked by the fall of the electric fan. Strange how dogs know. . . .

Chapter Fifteen

OUTSIDE THE RAJ

THE DAILY train rolled into the station of Mhow and disgorged six Tommies, a swarm of natives, Abdul and me. There were no Europeans on the platform, but as we came out of the station, I was greeted by an imposing looking native servant—a tall man, with a flowing gray beard. His waist was circled by a blue and yellow webbing belt, and he wore the same colors diagonally across the front of his spotless white pugarree.

"Colonel Sahib on parade, Sahib. Ladyship Sahib send me, Mohammed."

My sister had no right to this title; but nothing will convince a cavalry colonel's native butler that his master is not a Lord.

Mohammed led the way to a ramshackle Overland and installed me in the tonneau. Then he, Abdul and Bobbilall, a mild looking native driver, all crowded into the front seat and off we went. . . . As we turned in at the

gate, the car stopped short, and Mohammed erupted to give chase to some stray cattle grazing in the garden. Having thus demonstrated to Ladyship Sahib's brother his zeal and devotion, he got in again, and we thundered along the drive, and drew up at the bungalow. Drew up, stopped dead, stalled in fact—Bobbilall's usual way of calling a halt. Thank goodness my sister was there to enjoy my impressive arrival. When we had stopped laughing, we started in on the five years that had passed since we had last met, both talking at once.

Most of the mess came to dinner that night, and Mohammed was in his element—this was a big *tamasha*—a real *burra khana* (big spread —important dinner). He floated around like a dignified seneschal, in spite of two ridiculous black kittens that crawled up his bare legs each time he brought in a new dish.

Though skillfully disguised, the mutton on the menu had been goat on the hoof. The *Simkin peg*—champagne—was luke warm, though Mohammed had commandeered every bit of ice in the cantonment. It was so hot that the candles were bent double before dessert came. After dinner, bridge had to be

abandoned, as two of the gasoline lamps on the wall had exploded and the other four were only working half time. But in spite of these little miseries it was a cheery evening—a great relief after the stuffy pomposity of Calcutta.

The duties of a colonel's wife in India are a mixture of those of an ambassadress and the lady of the manor. She spends most of her time talking to the soldiers' wives about their children's ailments, patting expectant mothers on the back, and trying to squash streams of petty scandal that are poured into her ears from all sides.

After the day's work, everyone foregathers at the Club for the sundown drink. These military station clubs are far more friendly and amusing than the ones in big towns. And though one occasionally notices two groups glaring at each other across the room in a cantonment these feuds soon come to a head or die out.

The people quartered at Mhow are lucky, for the little military station is squeezed in between three native states. Two of these Indian princes were charming, hospitable, and only too willing to make life pleasant for the offi-

cers. The Maharajah of the third state was a vindictive creature.

His capital, Indore, was always crowded with home-rule partisans, and he himself was anti-European in general, and anti-British in particular. This was unfortunate, for the city itself was fascinating, with its narrow winding streets and multi-colored bazaars.

The Street of Pearl Merchants—countless little booths, and in front of each one the owner squatting cross-legged on a low platform. Grave, bearded Mohammedans, crafty Hindus, and fat Marwaris, all engrossed in the same business—weighing, stringing, and selling pearls. The treasure tucked away in these little shops is incredible, yet no one seems to rob them.

There is also the Street of Dyers. In this part of the country they have a special method of their own. The white muslin or silk scarf is twisted into a rope, tightly bound at intervals with strings, and the whole steeped in dye. When dry the original string is removed, the dyed parts tied up, and the whole dipped in a second color. These people are so expert that not only can they dye in four different colors,

but also in intricate designs. The scarves are left rolled up after the dyeing. If one asks to see their wares, they first cut the binding strings, and sprinkle the scarf with water. Then to take out the wrinkles, two of the shopmen, holding it spread out between them, rush madly up and down the street until it is dry. If you are looking at several samples at a time, the street is soon filled with these over-grown butterflies.

The palace of Indore is a gloomy looking barrack, and should you try to enter without proper escort, the surly, yellow-clad guards at the gate were likely to run a sword through you first, and afterwards ask you your business.

Motors are rare in Indore and the charming inhabitants curse and spit at them as they pass. The usual conveyance de luxe is a gaudily painted, two-wheeled ox-cart, drawn by trotting bullocks.

Dhar was quite the reverse—the ruling Maharajah was a genial sportsman, with a *penchant* for raising and training horses.

We were asked to go up there at a time of great rejoicing. Not only had he been made a

full major in the British Army, but he was also expecting a visit from the Viceroy. The preparations and the excitement over this latter event were tremendous. The whole army of Dhar was mobilized: ninety foot-soldiers, a squadron of cavalry, and two brass guns drawn by white bullocks. There were daily rehearsals, and my brother-in-law was asked to pass on one. Everything was done in the most approved military manner. Another British officer represented the Viceroy. He galloped on to the field where the troops were drawn up in a long line. The band played "God Save the King" and the Maharajah rode forth to greet him.

First came the inspection of the troops; a solemn business of waddling down the whole line on foot, to the air of "Life on the Ocean Wave." Finally the march past—everything most correct. The infantry went by to a swinging march, the guns rumbled past to "The Keel Row," the drivers sitting up proudly with the pipe-clayed artillery whip in the right hand, and a bullock's tail in the left. Then, most impressive of all—the cavalry, led by their colonel, the Maharajah's little ten-year-

old daughter. She rode like an Amazon, and her voice, though treble, carried authority.

She came around afterwards, in her diminutive uniform, very shy but proud of her privilege. Poor baby, it would not last much longer. At twelve she would have to join her sisters in the zenana. Dhar is a very progressive man —witnessed by the fact that she was there at all. But even he dare not prolong her brief period of freedom.

UDAIPUR

Di and I, and my newly acquired friend Mr. Punch—Judy's unsuspecting fiancé—started for Udaipur. All went smoothly, but at one station the monkeys climbed all over the carriages, even trying to come in. Punch objected to this intrusion, and the monkeys took offence at their reception, so things were lively till the train pulled out again.

We had decided not to stay at the Residency. For one thing we did not want to be a nuisance; and then again, certain things are expected of guests which are apt to cramp one's style in the way of sight-seeing.

We were given no choice, however, for the Resident of Indore had passed the word along, and we were met at the station by the Residency carriage. But ten minutes with our hosts, and we succumbed completely. They were only too glad to talk and play bridge with two Europeans but, at the same time, they made it quite clear that we were absolutely free to go our own way in re sight-seeing. The life of a Resident in the smaller Indian states must be monotonous at times. There are very few Europeans attached to the courts, and being miles from any other countrymen, the only interludes in their isolation are official visitors and the occasional tourist, the latter often a mixed pleasure. The Resident and his wife were delightful people. They were thirsty for gossip of the outside world, and full of information and local color. Next morning my host proved himself still more charming, for he took me aside:

"Look here, my wife and I have seen these places a million times, and besides, I've a lot of work to do. You won't mind, will you, if I turn over the Residency carriage and a servant

who speaks the lingo, and leave you to your own devices?"

Oh perfect host! What more could anyone want?

A smart-looking servant climbed on the box beside the driver, and the victoria trundled off in the sunshine. Salaams and salutations greeted us on every side, for the local inhabitants, seeing the Resident's carriage, paid their due homage, regardless of who the occupants might be.

Fine looking men are the Rajputs—medium height and slender, like most Indians, but with a proud carriage. The better class ones wore fierce looking beards, parted in the middle and brushed up on both sides. Their turbans were all colors of the rainbow and tightly wound, and each man of rank carried an enormous *tulwar* or sabre. They still look like the race of warriors they were, for the Rajputs and Marhatas were the crack cavalry in the time of the Moguls. They pride themselves on their chivalry, but there is one story they do not enjoy hearing.

Built on an island in the lake at Udaipur is a small marble palace. This was the favorite

recreation ground of the ruling Maharajah in days gone by. He had a favorite dancing-girl, and once in a moment of enthusiasm he promised to give her the palace for her very own, if she could dance along a silken rope stretched from the island to the shore. She accepted the wager and danced her way along the frail, uncertain bridge until she was within ten yards of her goal. Then, realizing he was going to lose his bet, he cut the cord with his *tulwar* and the girl was drowned.

But there are other stories of real chivalry on the part of the Rajputs. During the mutiny, one of the princes put all the British women and children, who fell into his hands, on an island, for safety. Here they were lodged and fed, unmolested, until the troublesome times were over. To this day his descendants are the only ones privileged to drive up to the door of the Residency. All others, no matter how high their rank, must leave their carriages at the big banyan tree halfway up the drive, and approach on foot.

Nothing in Italy or Switzerland can compare with the beauty of the lakes of Udaipur. The blue sky is mirrored in the clear waters,

and the dazzling palaces perched on the surrounding hills add to the sense of unreality. Here and there, marble halls and colonnades rise out of the water as if drawn from the crystal depths by some magician's wand, and gracefully curved bridges span the narrows between the fairy lakes.

Should you visit Udaipur, don't carry your investigations too far—especially as regards the new palaces. On close inspection, the glittering battlements turn to whitewashed mud and lime. And above all, don't go inside, unless you take a morbid pleasure in collector's atrocities. They are crammed to bursting with hideously bright Axminster carpets, red Bohemian glass chandeliers, ornate gilt clocks, and even silver spittoons.

Our guide led us up and down stairways, through horror-crowded halls, and finally came to a halt in a tower room overlooking the lake.

"There, Sahib, is one of the marvels of the palace," and he pointed to two windows. I looked at the superb view of the lake which they dominated, and agreed.

"No, not there. There!" said the guide,

pointing to a space in the wall where a third window should have been. I looked, and fled. For there, painted on the wall to give the effect of looking through a window-frame, was a ghastly lithographic caricature of the view we had just seen.

The elephants, chained to their rings in the court below, restored my sense of the picturesque, but I had no desire to see the inside of any more palaces.

Little watch towers dot the skyline of the hills about Udaipur; not as a precaution against stealthy foemen, for they were built long after internecine wars were suppressed, but as points of vantage for spotting game.

The largest of these towers is not only a lookout, but is also a bear pit where various wild beasts are matched against each other. The victor lives there in style until he in turn is defeated. When we were there, a large wild boar was King of the Castle. And a formidable-looking brute he was, some five feet from snout to tail and over a yard high. His curved tusks were awe-inspiring and his whole appearance, from his wicked, twinkling little eyes, to his cruel, sharp-hooved feet, bristled

with the assurance of a killer. He had reason for this—he had already destroyed two leopards and a panther. They say, in that part of the world, that the boar is the only animal that will drink at the jungle water holes at the same time as a tiger. Each knows and respects the other's strength. The outcome of a battle between them would be dubious, so they leave each other severely alone.

From this particular tower every day, at sundown, food is put out for wild pig. It is a fascinating sight to see them breaking from the jungle and trotting towards the wall; great tuskers pushing their way through the throng, and waddling sows, followed by piglets, still so young that they are spotted brown and white —excellent protective coloring in the jungle. Strange how quickly wild animals accept the idea of a sanctuary. The sweepers, under the direction of a Shikari, go right among them, distributing food from buckets. Should they try this at any other time or place with piglets around, they would be torn to pieces by a boar, if not by the sow herself. The idea of it is to keep the wild boar in the neighborhood against the time when the Maharajah might wish to

Sacred cows at the gate of the palace at Udaipur

In the Vale of Kashmir, not far from Rajputana

organize a shoot. But they are never shot from this particular tower, for that would defeat the whole object of the custom.

The reigning Maharajah no longer shot pig and was only interested in leopard or bigger game. Though seventy he was still keen, and when word came in that a leopard or a panther had been seen from one of the watch-towers, he would seize his rifle and leap into a light victoria drawn by four horses. Then would begin a wild ride along narrow country roads, not unlike the midnight drives of the mad Ludwig.

We were returning from one of the towers, along a twisting, narrow lane with a deep ditch on one side. Suddenly our driver pulled off the road into the bushes on the side away from the ditch. Just in time, too, for around the corner came four horses driven four-in-hand, lashed to a mad gallop. The light victoria swayed and bounced. In the back sat a white-haired man, clutching a rifle between his knees. His only expression was one of slight impatience, apparently at the slow rate of progress. We pulled onto the road again. At the next corner another four-in-hand thundered down

on us—this time there was no room to avoid it. The driver of the oncoming victoria, recognizing the Residency carriage, took to the ditch, Rajputs, attendants and all. What followed happened at an incredible speed. The men picked themselves out of the mélée, and while some unhitched the horses, of which—miraculously—none were hurt, and led them back to the road, others righted the victoria. In five minutes they were hitched up again and careening after the Maharajahs. The Resident's servant vouchsafed a laconic explanation:

"Maharajah—out after panther!"

The Rajputs are a sporting race, but their chief amusement is matching animals against each other. They will fight anything, from quails, rams, leopards, up to elephants themselves. The elephants are either allowed to charge each other until one poor brute retires with a headache, refusing further combat, or —and this way is more humane—their mahouts make them wrestle with their trunks across a low mud wall.

The more progressive of the Rajputs have taken to milder sports: tennis, polo, and mo-

toring; but the old Maharajah scorns them, particularly the last, and motors are more or less taboo in Udaipur.

The Resident gave a tennis party, and all but two of the players were Rajputs. It was amusing to see them arrive in their picturesque costumes and bright turbans and white tennis shoes. A strange mixture of East and West—though their right hands grasped expensive modern tennis-rackets, with the left they still clutched long, curved Rajput sabres, the badge of their rank. However, when play began they stacked their sabres against the poles of the net, and any amusement we may have felt at the quaintness of their garb was soon forgotten in admiration of the grace and skill of their game.

I found myself seated beside a pathetic little figure dressed in pink velvet. He was a cripple, half-paralyzed, and evidently consumptive. I made the usual inane remarks about the weather, but the little Rajput would not have it so.

"No, it is not hot."

"But aren't you hot in that pink velvet?"

The sweat was pouring down his face, but

again, vehemently, he denied the heat. Undoing a button of his coat, he pointed:

"No, I am not hot. See! It is lined with flannel, and my pants are lined with flannel, too."

I hastily changed the subject before he could demonstrate further. My second choice was innocent enough, for I expressed my admiration for one of the island palaces.

"Yes, they are very pretty, but they are not pleasant to live in."

"No?"

"No. There are many bogs."

"Bogs? . . . Swamps?"

"No. Bogs. They crawl on the ceiling and drop on me while I sleep, and I do not like it."

Evidently conversation about Udaipur was full of snares, and in desperation I attacked the subject of motor-cars.

"Why are there no motor-cars here?"

As if I had touched a hidden spring, the little man came to life. His eyes were full of excitement and his voice trembled.

"Because the Maharajah does not like them. But tell me, can *you* drive?"

"Yes. I have driven since I was fourteen."

"Then you are the man who can help me. My legs do not work well. (They were paralyzed.) Think you a car could be made which I could work with my hands?"

His voice became low and appealing.

"It is my very dream—to drive a car."

I spent the rest of the afternoon devising makeshifts for him—even drawing sketches—to explain how pedals could be replaced by levers.

Later, the Resident told me of the "curse" of the house of Udaipur.

In days gone by, the reigning Maharajahs had offended a Yogi. The Yogi cursed the prince, and predicted that the direct heir would never succeed to the throne. This curse had been fulfilled for twenty-five generations. "There is probably nothing in it," added the Resident, "but still—it's strange—" he hesitated a moment—"That little cripple you were speaking to today is Bapji, the heir-apparent."

I thought of the stern figure seated in the rocking victoria and made a mental bet that the "curse" would be fulfilled once more. . . .

Book Two:
AFGHANISTAN

Chapter One

FORBIDDEN TERRITORY

THE NIGHT Boots Baker gave a Fourth of July party also turned out to be the night of the big flood, and those of us who did not leave before midnight had to stay till the waters receded.

Our Consul General arrived wet through in spite of his raincoat.

"Oof, what a night! I'm soaked to my middle."

He shed his glistening oilskin and Boots led him off to find some dry things, while I followed with a glass of neat whiskey. "Hello, Dave! I've been looking for you all day—thought I'd find you here. Read this before it melts and I'll tell you more if you are interested." He produced a soggy envelope from an inner pocket, a letter from Lowell Thomas, whom he had met at the Juggernaut Festival. Thomas had been with Allenby in Palestine and Lawrence in Arabia, and since then had

made a name with his lectures and the moving pictures he had taken. Now he was wanting to go to Afghanistan and needed my help—wanted me to go to if possible.

"Why not! I've got a month's holiday due me and the market is slack. But what's wrong with this picture?"

"Well, as I understand it, Colonel Lawrence got him permission to go from the India Office, but the local authorities need some handling. I can help you with the Afghan Consul General at Simla, and, the British Chief of Military Intelligence being a relation of your wife, between the lot of us we ought to be able to swing it."

There was still another catch, that of procuring a motor-car, for the local automobile agents proved a cold unsympathetic lot. In vain I explained what a lot of free advertisement and publicity it would net them: the canny Scots only shook their heads.

"Na, na laddie,—it's a bad country you're going into, and it's no verra sure ye'll come back your sel. But supposing ye did, and by some fool's miracle brought back the car; what good do ye think it would be to us after five

hundred miles hammering over mountain trails and desert sand?"

Two days of this before I heard that Randolph, a director of the General Motors, was in town. He not only had business imagination but also faith in the abilities of his cars and compatriots. After half an hour's talk he came across with a brand new Buick, extra tires, oil and insurance, free, gratis and for nothing. The only thing he asked in return was that I should do my best to bring the car back, and that Thomas should give the Buick due praise and tribute in his lectures.

Thomas came down to Calcutta and put up at my flat. With him came a six-foot-four Adam Khel Afridi from unadministered territory, called Naim-Shah, who had been an officer's orderly in an Indian cavalry regiment. He was a jovial soul and proved himself invaluable during the trip, but he was a damned nuisance round the house with his wild tales of hillmen. I discovered this when I spoke to Abdul, my bearer, about the trip.

"Abdul,—I'm going to Afghanistan."

"Yes, Sahib."

"Now, I want you to go with me as far as

Peshawar and wait there for me till I come out."

"No, Sahib,—Peshawar too full of cut-throats—they would murder me. I'll go all the way to Kabul with Sahib, but not wait Peshawar. . . ."

"Abdul,—you're a fool, Peshawar is British territory. Who's been filling you full of prunes,—Naim-Shah?"

Abdul shifted his feet nervously and remained silent but obdurate. Suddenly a thought struck him.

"Sahib, taking Judy Miss Sahib with him?" (He knew Judy the bull-terrier was the apple of my eye.)

"No,—Edward Sahib will take her till I get back."

"Now, I know it's bad country. No, Sahib, —I stay here in Calcutta." And nothing I could say or do would budge him.

Time was getting short, so we decided to rail the car up to Peshawar and start from there.

At Delhi it had to be transhipped to a North-Western truck, and knowing India I stayed over to see to this myself, not wishing to have it arrive at Peshawar stripped of everything

copper or brass that could be sawed, filed or wrenched loose.

At Lahore Thomas had some business to do, so I did the town. Lahore is noted for two things: dancing girls and fine red dust. I kept a beady optic peeled for the first, but only succeeded in getting an eye full of the second. Our luck was dead out, for that night on taking the train the fan in our compartment went on strike. Sleep was out of the question in that rolling oven, so we smoked and sweated in silence, till in pulling out a trunk from under the seat, I connected with the business end of a hornet. The silence was shattered with rock-splitting curses, and the temperature in the compartment went up another ten degrees.

Next morning at Rawalpindi, Thomas made a rush to the hotel to get his mail and I passed a bad ten minutes wondering whether he would get back before the train started. The doors were slammed, the locomotive whistled and the guard walked down the train, but still no Thomas. Just as I remembered that Thomas had both railway passes, the delinquent appeared, gulped a cup of tea tendered by a station-vendor, waved his hand to the

guard and the train started. Close shave?—Not a bit of it. He had bribed the guard to hold the train till he returned and had merely forgotten to mention the fact to me.

It was 130° F. in the shade when we arrived at Peshawar, and as the car hadn't arrived yet, we retired to the hotel of the town—the only one in fact. The dining hall and lounge were in the main building, but most of the rooms were outside, built in long rows like bathing cabins. However, the beer was cold, there were electric fans and life took on a more pleasing aspect. We fell asleep listening to the Chowkidars calling the watches to one another on their beats. These watchmen are a necessary evil in that part of the world, for Peshawar is the last town before the Khyber-pass on the Northwest frontier, and the territory on both sides of the pass is unadministered and inhabited by such wild hill tribes as Afridis, Muhrman, Adam Khel and Mahsuds. They are splendid types of men physically, but they kill for the sport of killing and could steal the sheets from under a ticklish old maid with insomnia. When not engaged in raiding-parties, they carry on little family feuds,

which make our own Kentucky mountaineer's affairs look like pink tea fights. Every now and then they swoop down and raid Peshawar and several times have held up regimental messes at dinner, departing with the mess silver. For this reason the European quarter is surrounded by barbed wire, and "knife-rack" barricades are thrown across the roads every night. If you walk round after dark, it is well to talk English at the top of your lungs, answer promptly and flop on the ground if challenged. Sentinels in that part of the world hail and fire simultaneously.

Now, the Chowkidar, or watchman, system is undoubtedly blackmail. If you hire the proper number in keeping with your station and pay them regularly you are more or less immune from raids. For the gang your own men come from naturally won't molest you, and there is a complicated arrangement amongst the various gangs for swapping mutual protection. Should any outside marauders appear, your own brigands and their allies will put up a pretty good fight. If, however, you don't pay and play according to their union rules, trouble and retribution are yours. Wit-

ness the case of a Major who was sharing a house with three other Majors. They each kept a Chowkidar and all went well till the first Major was promoted to be Lieutenant-Colonel. His man then came to him and told him he would have to have a second watchman in accordance with the dignity of his rank, etc. The Colonel protested. Was he not still living in the same house? Four men had been sufficient before and four men should be sufficient now. Two nights later the house was raided. But strange as it may seem only the Colonel's kit was stolen. Not one thing belonging to the three other Majors was touched. All of which proves the necessity of keeping a sufficient number of Chowkidars.

I spent the next day overhauling the car while Thomas bombarded every railway station in India with telegrams trying to locate Mr. Chase, his photographic expert. We also listened to various comforting accounts as to the sort of road we would encounter. As I remember it, the description was something like this: "It's all right through the Khyber and up to Dakka; then there isn't any road to speak of—just sand and rocks. Every three

A bazaar at Peshawar

In the heart of the Khyber Pass

miles you will probably hit a washout, and be careful when you do strike anything like a road, as it will be strewn with donkey shoe nails. The grades are awful and the turns worse. Be sure and take enough water, etc." Things began to look quite cheerful. In the meantime we went down to the old city to get our passports visaed by the Afghan agent in Peshawar. We wound our way through the swarming crowd, past the brass-worker's bazaar, past the grain merchants and finally discovered the agent himself in a barn-like structure counting Astrakhan lambs' skins. He was not a typical Afghan, but we didn't know this at the time. Enormously fat with suspicious slanting eyes, he was much more like some of the Persian types. After questioning us for half an hour as to our intentions and motives for visiting Afghanistan, he announced that it didn't concern him, as he had just been relieved of his official duties. (Probably the Amir, unlike Caesar, had become suspicious of his prodigious obesity on the principle that where there is no fat there is no profit.) Then the argument continued as follows:—

"*Who was* in charge of granting visas then until the next man arrived?" He was. "Then why wouldn't he give them?" Because he had been relieved of these duties. He spoke not a word of English, so the argument was carried on in Pushtu by Naim-Shah our six-foot-four Patham orderly and then into Hindustani to me. Naim-Shah looked as if he would like to end the discussion with the butt of a rifle or a knife. We finally won our point, but the whole thing began over again when it came to Naim-Shah's own turn.

He came from unadministered territory and had never possessed a passport, but though he had already been to Kabul twice on his own, the fact that he was going with us altered the whole case and the wrangle began once more. As I was no longer necessary as an interpreter of Hindustani, I chose the lesser of two evils and retired to the heat of the street rather than endure further the odor of the sheepskins. Half an hour passed, the sky took on a sullen copper hue and peal after peal of thunder echoed and re-echoed in the mountains. Then that ice-cold wind which precedes a North-wester in India swept up the street and the

dust devils rose in protest, till sky, air and street took on a sinister dun color. The shopkeepers became somewhat agitated and summoned all hands on deck to shorten sail, i.e., take down their awnings and board up the windows. When they drove the sheep tethered outside into the shops, I began to have some apprehensions as to the impending deluge, so entered the sheep-skinner's once more and dragged forth Thomas and Naim-Shah. Too late. We had hardly started for the hotel before the storm broke. I was literally blinded by the rain and had to stop and wait till it slackened a bit for fear of hitting something.

We finally got back, and as the storm was over in two or three hours, we returned to the old city to change Indian rupees into Kabuli rupees (the latter looks more like a zinc Chinese laundry check than any known coin), and while waiting outside the money-changer's, I witnessed a very strange smoking party. Six or seven burly hillmen were squatting in a circle preparing a hubble-bubble-pipe. When it was ready, the first man took three or four puffs and was seized by a violent spasm of coughing. He then generously passed it on to

his neighbor, who, when he had reached the same beatific state, passed it on in turn. This continued until the pipe had made the round, and by this time the entire circle appeared to be in the last stages of galloping consumption. I learned afterwards that they were smoking a particularly pernicious drug peculiar to the region, but they certainly seemed to enjoy it.

The second night we were in Peshawar, a "tum tum" (tub-cart) drove up to the hotel and the two officers occupying it asked for me. Thomas thought I was sick, for I had already gone to bed, so leaving me to sleep, they bundled Thomas into the "tum tum" and took him back to their mess for a drink. Thomas appeared two or three hours later somewhat the worse for wear and explained the visitation. "Seems that my old friend Cocky the exchange broker had belonged to this outfit during the war and had written in advance to make things pleasant for me."

It was a Pack-battery of Mountain Artillery and Pack-batteries have always been famous for hard living and hard drinking.

The next night they came again, to collect us both, but Thomas hadn't recovered from

the night before, so I went alone in my glory. They were gentle with me at first till they discovered I had merely been sleeping the night before. Then on the orders of the President of the mess, a gray-haired wiry little major, they started in to make me welcome. Only men who scramble over a few mountains every morning before breakfast, with hillmen and mules, can drink like that and live. As a rule, they keep pretty strict training, but when they invite anyone to their mess, their shells are not loaded with reduced charges.

They opened up on me with gin and bitters, passing on to sherry with the soup, and then sloshed me with *Simkin peg* (champagne). After coffee, they introduced me to the famous "Gunners Madeira" and then settled down to a steady bombardment of brandy and soda for the rest of the evening. They hadn't seen any strange face for months and were only too pleased to talk to someone new.

It is really wonderful how the British keep up their traditions wherever they go. There we were, in the last frontier town before entering the sinister Khyber. At any moment the mess might have been raided by hillmen and

yet the scene within the room might have been at Woolwich or Aldershot. The long table, with its perfect appointments of linen and glass, was decorated with flowers and really magnificent trophies and other regimental silver. Though they wore white mess jackets instead of the sombre woolen ones, every man was turned out as smartly as though they expected a general. The Captain on my right began speaking:

"Too bad we left our best bit of plate at home—you would have liked it."

"It was a silver model of a 9:2 gun mounted on a railway truck, and what's more, it fired a real 22 cartridge."

"We used to have no end of fun on wild nights holding target practice in the mess."

"It got a bit corroded toward the end though and the Colonel put a stop to it, for we almost winged a mess waiter one night."

Like all real enthusiasts, even in their hours of ease these men played at their profession.

The major on my left took up the conversation.

"We had another agitator among the troops

this morning. I am afraid there will be trouble."

"Why, Sir, do you expect that's going to stir up sedition?"

"Lord, no; our men are as true as they make them. I'm only afraid that they will do him in, and then we will get raked over the coals for it. Last time one came round we found him dead on a manure pile two days later. He was damned lucky they didn't put their laundry mark on him, for most of my battery are Pathans."

This was interesting. I had read of the dead being mutilated in frontier warfare, and here was a chance to find out exactly how the hillmen did it. "Oh! it's a childish business. It's the usual Mohammedan way of spoiling a man's fun in Paradise, but in this part of the world, by way of cheerful surprise for the friends who find him, they slit the skin all round his waist and pull it over his head like a shirt." "Well, how can you have any hold over men like these? Aren't you afraid they will break out at any moment?" "Oh! no; once you have got their confidence, they will put their hands in the fire for you,—it's almost

pathetic the faith they have in us. When I was on my way to Mesopotamia, my men came to me very much worried about something:

"'Major Sahib, how do you steer the ship at night?'

"'Why, the same way as during the day, you owls.'

"'No, Sahib, for during the day there is the broad white road behind to guide by (the wake of the ship), but at night we can't even see that.'" The major went on:

"But the man I have never been able to forget was my Sikh Trumpeter in Mesopotamia. We had had a slight brush with the enemy. As we rode on, I noticed he was wabbling in his saddle, so I turned and cursed him out.

"'Hurrup,' Singh, what's the matter with you?'

"'One would think you were afraid!'

"'Sit up straight, man, and sound the advance.'

"The next second I could have cut out my tongue. He gave a queer twisted smile, said 'Rung Ho, Sahib' (that's the Sikh war cry, you know) and fell out of his saddle dead."

"He had been hit in three places and never

peeped. By God, after that I had to give him a funeral-pyre, though I had to use the legs of my camp table, chairs and tent poles to do it."

After dinner, we discussed the possibility of war between America and England and the probable outcome.

In Calcutta, there was a general, who, when he had had a certain amount to drink, used to take his guests into his study and show them a map on the wall. This map represented his pet hobby—almost a mania, i.e., the invasion of the United States by England and her allies. He would expatiate at length, on just how many ships, men and aeroplanes would be needed—sketch out a rough campaign as to which ports, cities and territories should be attacked first, and end up with a heartfelt announcement that the sooner it came the better, as far as he was concerned.

The discussion in the mess was totally different. It was purely hypothetical and devoid of personal feelings. The good points of both armies were reviewed, and the final result guessed at. The major ended the argument on a whimsical Irish note:

"It would be a terrible shame and God

knows how it would end, but wouldn't it be a grand fight while it lasted?"

As it was then half-past four and every one had to be on parade at five, we called it an evening and they drove me home.

. . . . .

Chase turned up the same morning; five-foot-nothing of cheerful iron nerve, and energetic optimism, and the work of loading the car began at once. The tonneau was completely filled up with four eight-gallon tins of gasoline and an enormous three-foot cube zinc-lined case of photographic instruments and supplies. There was a row of smaller gas and oil tins along the starboard running-board, and on the port side we strapped a bedding-roll, two suit-cases and the camera tripods. Two more bedding-rolls nestled between the mud-guards and the hood, and every spare crack and cranny was filled up with odds and ends—like canned goods, water bottles, etc. By the time we had finished, the neat little touring car looked like an overloaded tinker's van. The men on the back seat had to sit with their legs cocked up on the cases, as there was no

more room on the floor, and I thanked God I was driving. According to a rough calculation, she was carrying over 1,000 pounds dead-weight, plus four people averaging 150. This meant some 1,600 odd pounds over the roughest and steepest sort of going. Under these circumstances, I was just a little worried about the springs and equal distribution of weight; neither was I absolutely certain whether "Belinda, the Beautiful Buick" would even move.

The last fear was totally unfounded, however, for she rolled off sweetly at six sharp the next morning.

The road from Peshawar up to the entrance of the Khyber-pass is as fine as one could possibly desire. In fact, both the roads—the caravan and motor—are perfect, and in the case of the latter, though grades are steep, the turns are easy and scientifically banked. We did not see a single caravan in the Khyber itself, as the pass had been opened for them the day before, so they were a day's march ahead.

The road is dominated the whole way through the pass by forts and outposts, and all along the line there are significant little piles of white-washed rock or crosses painted on the

rocky sides. These serve as range indicators to the troops, on guard in the various forts, so that no time need be wasted for a sighting shot in case of trouble. At Landikhotal we filled up "Belinda" with water and showed our Khyber-pass permits, so as not to be held up on reaching the frontier. Then on down past various gangs of tribesmen, working on the railway, all wearing bandoliers, and with their rifles handy, in spite of the covering pickets guarding them. We passed Jamrood without stopping, and finally came down to the plain, and were confronted by a barbed wire entanglement, a Ghurka-sentinel, and a large sign in English bearing the following warning:—

"IT IS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN TO CROSS THE BORDER INTO AFGHAN TERRITORY"

The sentinel stopped us, but it only took ten minutes for the N. C. O. commanding the outpost to telephone Landikhotal and we were allowed to proceed. The Afghan sentry on the other side of the barrier did not seem in the least bit interested, but we hadn't travelled a hundred yards down the road before we were

challenged by the first Afghan post. We stopped and argued for over half an hour, but the Afghans were not at all impressed by our passports or visas. Finally, they decided to allow us to proceed to Dakka, where there was a Colonel commanding, provided we took a guard along. There was nothing else to do, so the extra weight was accepted and off we went. The road was not at all bad, running parallel to the Kabul River most of the way, but in spite of the proximity of the water, the lava rocks go right down to the banks with no sign of vegetation, and the grim landscape is made up entirely of sand, rocks and gray lava. Dakka, where the Colonel commanded, is situated on a bank of the river, and consists of mud houses of various sizes and states of repair. There was no wall, but some of the large houses were veritable fortresses and all the windows on the outside nothing more than loopholes. Naim-Shah found the way to the post of the Colonel and then a long tedious wait ensued while they telephoned to Kabul for permission to let us proceed. It seemed that *I* was the stumbling block this time, as mine was the only passport which did not have

the visa of the Afghan Minister at Simla. I had saved ten rupees, but ran a serious risk of being knifed as a British spy.

While Thomas and Naim-Shah were arguing with the Colonel, I had a chance to observe some of the people passing along the road. The women wore a regular uniform consisting of a black shawl thrown over their heads and shoulders, and red trousers. This is done so that they may be distinguished from the men at a distance, for women are far too scarce in this region to be shot at indiscriminately in the ordinary course of amusement. They do not wear a *purdah*, but draw their shawls across the lower part of their faces when they meet men. The men themselves are magnificent types,—all over six feet—well developed, lean and hard looking, with bold aquiline noses, heavy beards and keen inquisitive eyes. They walk with a long free stride, and look you squarely in the eye. In this region they wear *puggarees* and bob their hair. All of them are armed to the teeth and their general appearance is far more imposing than that of the regular soldiers, who appear slovenly and

ill-equipped in their shoddy uniforms, caps and well patched boots.

Still we waited for word to come through from Kabul, and in the meantime the caravans which we had passed an hour before caught up and went on. First, ten or twelve armed guards, then a hundred or more asses, almost hidden under their burdens of bales, boxes and barrels, then a group of drivers walking and talking together, leaving their charges to find their own way along. No danger of them loitering to crop grass, as there was none. More asses, more drivers, and so they straggled past enveloped in a thick pall of gray volcanic dust. At 12:30 word came over the wire that we could continue and, what more, without a guard; so we thankfully departed.

On leaving Dakka, one could hardly distinguish the road from the surrounding rocks and pebble-covered ground, but we could see the dust of the caravans a mile or so ahead, and by laying our course in that direction, finally came out on a sandy track, which a mile or so further on developed into a fairly good road. "Belinda" made good time for a while, but the road ended abruptly, and we encountered an-

other track with sand five or six inches deep; the original surface was full of holes, and boulders were sprinkled freely over its entire breadth. Then we came to grief. In trying to avoid a hole and two boulders, we landed in a sand pocket up to the axles, and were going too slow to enable the momentum to pull us out. I tried all the usual methods of extricating a bogged car, but finally decided we would have to unload. We accordingly found a firm place on the road, where one could stop without having the car sink into the sand, and proceeded to pack the 1,000 pounds of luggage some 100 yards up the road. Thomas was ill, so there were only three of us for the job, and as the temperature was now well above 130° F., we were somewhat thirsty when it was done. Then I discovered there was no more drinking water, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I persuaded Naim-Shah that gasoline is not a good substitute. The outlook was serious, as we were thirty miles from nowhere, no water, temperature 130° F. and Thomas far from well. But the car climbed and crawled out of the sand pocket, and after loading up again we started off. I had learned my lesson, and

Street scene in Central Asia

Tribesmen at one of the fountains built by the British in the Khyber Pass

after that nothing less than a stonewall in front of us could have persuaded me to slow down when I saw sand ahead. About 3:30, we stopped at a mud-walled village to get water. While Naim-Shah went to the well to draw it, the people crowded round the car. One old man conveyed to me that he had lost three sons in the last war with England, and wanted to know what I personally was going to do about it. I tried to impress upon the bereaved father the fact that I was American and that it was nothing in my young life, but strange to say the genial old brigand did not seem to know where America was, and, if I read his meaning rightly, cared less. Luckily Naim-Shah appeared with the water, before they got really personal and away we went.

Just before we reached the hills which lie between Jelalahbad and the frontier, we came to the first washout. The road was intersected by three streams and the ground between was piled high with round stones and boulders. By going ahead on foot and carefully reconnoitering, we found a possible way across and then drove over it without any mishap. From there on we began to climb. The grades were

steep and the curves not only sharp, but blocked with shifting sand, so we did not make very fast progress. Suddenly we saw the valley in which Jelalahbad is situated, and were almost dazzled by the brilliant green after the drab dun-colored lava and sand through which we had been creeping.

Jelalahbad is really a garden city. The numerous fine buildings standing in luxurious gardens obliterate the squalor of the mud houses, and the severe lines of the mud fortifications serve as a background or foil for the peach orchards and flowers. We drove through long straight avenues, shaded by fruit trees, and as it was only 5:30 P. M. decided to push through to the Amir's rest house at Nimloh. Fortunately we reached it just before the gates were closed, for Nimloh is a fortified village with high mud-walls, and once the heavy doors are closed for the night they stay closed till next morning.

It was 8:30 by the time we got to the rest house itself, and disappointment was ours. The attendants had quite given up hope as the hours passed, and, deciding that we had stopped at Jelalahbad, hadn't bothered to pre-

pare food. Neither the beauty of the rest house, situated in a magnificent grove of cypress-trees with a large tank just back of it, nor the attentions of the servants who rushed around and spread a carpet on the lawn, satisfied the hungry travellers. We howled for food. The servants dragged out beds, tables and chairs, arranged them on the carpet and suggested turning in. We still howled for nourishment, having eaten nothing but a few biscuits since 5:30 that morning.

Realizing that there would be no peace until it was forthcoming, they started to prepare it, and in the meantime by way of keeping these foreign pests quiet, suggested a wash-up. The idea was accepted enthusiastically by Thomas, Chase and I, who took turns at the one bathroom in the bungalow. It was an amusing place: everything in it was silver, or silver-plated, and everything was filthy. We managed to wash away most of the dust and grime, and then proceeded to fall asleep while waiting for the food.

Just before midnight it appeared, and we awoke and partook ravenously of a sort of unsweetened custard, chupatees, tea and fruit.

At the same time, a file of fifteen shabby but well-armed soldiers turned up, and we were informed that we could sleep in peace now that our guard had arrived; this we did in spite of it, for they camped down within ten yards of us and proceeded to argue, wrangle and spit throughout the night.

The next morning we left at 5:30, after a breakfast of tea and fruit. I also took the opportunity to lighten "Belinda's" burden by leaving some gasoline to be picked up on the return trip. On leaving Nimloh, the road began to climb, the turns became sharper and sharper and grades heavier until we reached a height of nearly 9,000 feet. On one of the down grades we passed several men running for their lives, with their cloaks thrown over their heads. One of them shouted to Naim-Shah as he passed, who promptly urged me to crowd on speed. I was a little dubious, as the road was steep, with dangerous blind corners, but when Naim-Shah explained that someone had stirred up a hornet's nest fifty yards down the road, I complied at once. (The hornet's in that part of the country are

really deadly—it takes only five or six stings to kill a strong man.) A little further on we heard a couple of rifle shots, but did not stop to enquire if they were personal or not. We descended into another valley and then started climbing once more, finally coming down a terrific grade into a gorge, where a dam for a turbine electric power station was being built. There were two companies of sappers and miners working on the rocky slopes on each side of the gorge, and an elephant was patiently pulling the beam of a crude cement-mixer round and round. Thomas and Chase got the cinema camera out to photograph it, and I drove the car into the shade of the cliffs. Suddenly, everyone began shouting and running, and the uproar was punctuated by shrill whistles from sappers working above us. I gathered something was about to happen, and fortunately grasped the meaning of a small child who pointed frantically down the road as he ran past, so started the car and followed him. I had only gone seventy-five yards when several heavy explosions occurred and the very spot where the car had been parked was bom-

barded with rocks, from the blasts that had just been touched off. After this, we continued our way along an excellent road, arriving at Kabul at 3:30 P. M. without further incident.

Chapter Two

KABUL

AFGHANISTAN has always been more or less a closed book and this has been especially true since the accession to the throne of the present Amir. The reason for this is apparent when it is recalled that the late Amir was assassinated by one of his generals, owing to his refusal to declare war against the British. His death was followed by hostilities which came to an end in 1919. Towards the close of 1921 a definite treaty of amity between the British Government and that of the Amir was signed at Kabul. However, in view of past history, the present ruler Amanullah is chary of showing partiality, or what may be construed by his turbulent subjects as partiality, to the British or any of their allies.

Afghanistan as a buffer state between the former Russian Empire and British India, has always occupied a place of prime importance in the relations of the two countries, since its

attitude is more or less involved in the peace and security of India.

With the disappearance of Russian-Imperial power, arose the still more dangerous Red menace. The Afghans were very pleased at first with this new foe to British India and British power, but if the present signs are rightly read, they are beginning to realize that Bolshevik dominion is a double-edged sword which may at any moment menace their own independence. It is more than possible that in this country of kaleidoscopic changes, the Bolshevik Minister and his advisers may find at no great distant date that they are *personae non gratae* in the country.

Just before Thomas and I went up, we received a lecture from Mr. Engert, the American Chargé d'Affaires at Teheran, who had just come through Kabul from Persia.

"You fellows are going into a bad country. The Afghans are very suspicious and very sudden. If you arouse any suspicion they will knife you first and ask questions afterwards. Now, if anything should happen to you, no one could do a damn thing. The British would have to pretend to do something, but nothing

short of another Afghan war would help matters, and you aren't worth that expense and trouble. Walk easy, and don't get killed or imprisoned. If you do, you will cause the British Government a lot of trouble."

A British Intelligence officer favored us with a few more words of wisdom.

"I want to warn you chaps that though you may be more or less under the Amir's protection, he has a lot of powerful enemies. Some of these Khans are in almost open revolt, and are all powerful in their own district. Nothing would give them more pleasure, than to show their independence by doing in the Amir's guests. Besides these fellows, look out for Ghazis (religious fanatics)—they might 'chop' you just to acquire merit, and no one can control those brutes."

In reply to these reassuring words, I asked him about taking arms with us, and gathered some more good advice.

"Take automatic pistols, or revolvers, but keep them hidden. Rifles wouldn't do you much good—and as they are worth their weight in silver, would only be an added temptation to shoot and rob you. . . ."

At the time of our visit, the political situation was somewhat involved. The Persian mission which had been there for some time seemed to be without great influence, while the Italian representative had arrived too recently to make his importance felt as yet. There remained to be mentioned the British, Chinese, Bokharen and Turkish missions. The last named was the most powerful party in Afghanistan at that time. The Amir was surrounded by members of the Young Turk party; the army was being trained by Turkish officers, who in turn had been trained by Germans, while the few engineers and architects in the country were brought in by the influence of the Young Turks. When to these facts are added those bonds of race and religion and political outlook, and the further fact of Afghanistan having been at war with Great Britain as recently as 1919, it seemed as if the Turkish, and to some extent the German, influence would be likely to be all powerful in Kabul for a long time. Enver Pasha, as a sort of free lance, was then engaged in hostilities in Turkestan with the Bolshevik forces, and his success there might have meant the realiza-

tion of a dream dear to the Afghans—the annexation of Bokhara and Turkestan.

In the diplomatic and educated society, the veneer of Western civilization is very thin, and like most small isolated countries of a turbulent character, Afghanistan has an exaggerated idea of its own importance in the politics of the world. The educated classes, or rather those occupying the higher positions, are extremely ignorant and naïve. They have no idea of their own history, and the following story will illustrate their childish credulity in the tales they have been told by their fathers and grandfathers. I asked one of the Foreign Office officials who had built the walls, —(portions of which, though now in ruins, still exist)—which used to enclose Kabul. He took one or two wild guesses, and then by way of changing the subject, pointed to a fort and announced with a certain pride:

"That's where Mr. McNaughton was killed. . . ."

Everyone in India knows that McNaughton, a previous British resident, had been invited to a garden party, cut off from his retinue and treacherously murdered, but in order to obtain

the Afghan version of the story, I remarked casually—"Shucks, why did they do that?" The explanation left me gasping.

"Oh, he was a very wicked man. He used to amuse himself by throwing gold pieces from a balcony to the Afghan soldiers below, and when they scrambled for the gold, he picked them off with a rifle. Then the soldiers became infuriated and in spite of the Amir's orders they killed him."

Though most progressive himself, the Amir has to use somewhat primitive methods in arguing with his subjects. Kabul boasts of a cotton and woolen mill, and in order to encourage the support of home industries the Amir secretly inspects his courtier's wardrobes and slashes any garments, made of foreign cloth, till it is useless. He even carries out this propaganda work with a pair of nail scissors if one of his staff is actually wearing an offending garment. But in spite of this weakness for protecting local trade, he is the keynote of the whole government and, as far as one can see, attends to everything himself. So much for the intelligentsia.

The strength and backbone of the country

lie in the hillmen, and various powerful chieftains or Khans. These hillmen are devoted to their Amir, and as long as he retains their confidence, he has nothing to fear from the educated classes, as they are mere froth in comparison to the former. He is an extremely ambitious man and has the Mullahs or priests well under control. This is important, as the priests are more conservative, and one must overcome a strong opposition from this quarter to carry out any modern ideas. At the same time, it is more than probable that Amanullah's ideas are a little too big for the financial status of his country. Afghanistan is barely self-supporting and its only hope of becoming financially or industrially stronger is by opening up the suspected mineral wealth of the country. The exploitation of possible oil fields and other resources would require considerable capital. Afghanistan hasn't got it, and as they wish to keep this possible wealth entirely to themselves, it is hard to see how the deadlock can be broken, until they decide to grant concessions to foreign capital on a royalty basis. The same applies to railroads, necessary to make any mineral resources a

commercial possibility. Certainly no one is going to float a loan for a railway in Afghanistan, if the only guarantee back of the bonds is the present somewhat raw and uncertain government.

For these reasons, the Amir's ideas of sending ministers to all the Great Powers and maintaining embassies or legations in the various European capitals must sooner or later fall through for lack of funds to support them.

There is another thing to be considered in this respect. It is difficult to get other countries to reciprocate, unless there is some imperative political reason, for they cannot be sure of exterritorial rights and protection being extended to their diplomatic envoys. This was adequately proved by the unfortunate fate of an attaché of the Italian Legation a few years ago. He had been menaced or attacked by a fanatic, and had shot the *ghazi* in self defense. The Afghan authorities arrested, tried and executed him, regardless of his exterritorial privileges, or even Mussolini. A second case cropped up later when they caught an unfortunate German as he was

being smuggled over the British border in the German Minister's car. In the face of these incidents, why should other countries send representatives, unless they are forced to have someone there for local political reasons?

. . . . .

We rolled slowly along a tree-shaded boulevard, until stopped by a red-coated policeman who attached himself to our person, willy-nilly, and under his guidance we drove to a central square, hoping there to find someone in authority. Having escorted us thus far, the policeman seemed to feel that his duty was performed, and he waited by the side of the car making no effort to aid us, apparently expecting that Allah would send someone to talk with us. For half an hour he stood by, taciturn and resigned. I was about to suggest that we adopt the desperate method, in the absence of an American Representative, of appealing to the British Legation, when a two-wheeled American gig drove up, and we were addressed in jerky English by a little bespectacled man, who announced himself as

being the "Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs."

"Oh, I—see—you—have—arrived."—(long pause for thought). "You—will—find—a—rest—house—over—there."

Then with a vague sweep of his hand, embracing three possible roads, on he went. "When in doubt take the middle road," someone murmured, and this eventually led us to the haven where we would be.

The rest house was surrounded by a moat, over which we passed on a dilapidated wooden bridge, and I shivered as I thought of the 900 pounds dead weight. But, the bridge held and the place itself was worth the risk. It proved to be a delightful and comfortable two-story brick building, surrounded by rose gardens and fountains.

Only an Eastern traveller can fully appreciate and enjoy the sight and sound of running-water in a rose garden, following the dust and heat of a tropical day. Not alone here, but at almost every rest house at which we stopped we found fountains and tanks from which the necessary water for food and washing could be drawn. It is interesting to recall that a favor-

Every Afghan carries a rifle from early childhood; and the only law in most parts of the land is the law of the rifle and knife

The expedition on the streets of Kabul; the author at the wheel, next to him Boots-and-Spurs, and in the rear Lowell Thomas, Naim-Shah, and Harry Chase

ite benefaction of rich Mohammedans is to provide, by will, for the water supply of a village or town.

In this Omar Khayyam, Persian and Eastern setting, it was somewhat startling to be greeted at the door by the familiar sound of a broad American accent proceeding from the lips of no less a person than Washington B. V. der L. of recent Russian renown.

"Come right in boys, I've been expecting you for several days."

Mr. V. der L. posted us on many local matters and after enjoying the delight of a real shower bath and partaking of food, we unloaded the car and then tested the beds for several hours. These were cord-strung frames, without mattresses, but clean. During the evening Thomas wrote a letter to the Foreign Minister soliciting an interview for both of us with the Amir.

At 9:30 we were introduced to our first Afghan dinner, which consisted of pilau, saffron colored and scented, more pilau and fruit. By ten o'clock we were fast asleep, only to be awakened at four by the extreme cold which came as a painful revelation after the heat of

the desert. I spent the remaining hours till dawn running up and down the sleeping porch doing Swedish exercises in a vain effort to get warm.

That morning was consecrated to establishing diplomatic relations with the Afghan Government. We drove over the frail drawbridge, passed the Bolshevik Legation, with its blood-red flag flapping fraternally in the breeze, down broad dusty avenues to the Foreign Office.

This occupied a long two-story rambling building, not very well kept up, but as usual with superb gardens forming a setting of green around its dingy length. On arrival, we were shown into a small dark waiting room where, during the hour that elapsed before we were introduced into the presence of the Foreign Minister, no less than ten Afghans of varying grades in the hierarchy, came into the room, bowed solemnly, shook hands with us and departed their several ways. Finally, our be-spectacled friend of the previous evening appeared and announced that *perhaps* we might see the Amir next week. Hereafter, in speaking of this official, Thomas and I called

him "Perhaps," as he was the first man to bring to our notice a beauty and variety in the Afghan speech, with which we had not previously credited it. We are all familiar with the Spanish "mañana," our own "tomorrow," and even the Greek "avrion," but these expressions are far too definite for diplomatic circles in Afghanistan, so the Kabul equivalent of these somewhat brusque terms is always qualified by the equivalent of our word "perhaps." It was "perhaps tomorrow"—"perhaps next week,"—but the climax of indefiniteness seemed reached when he said in his deliberate speech, "perhaps—next—week—the—Amir—might—receive—you."

It is to be feared I broke in rather abruptly on the smooth and even flow of diplomatic intercourse in Kabul, when I stated that we were under the necessity of starting on our return journey within three days. True we had another two days tucked up our sleeves, but I was beginning to find my "sea-legs" in Eastern diplomacy.

"Perhaps" retired hurt, and after consultation with the Foreign Minister announced that "perhaps his Majesty will see you the day

after tomorrow." He had won the first round and it was our turn to retire hurt to our corner.

We left the Foreign Office to go to the Persian Legation, our party having been augmented by the presence of an interpreter, whose only defect was that he appeared ignorant of any language but his own. He may be described as an interpreter by birth. His father had been an interpreter and as the eldest son the title had descended to him, although the qualifications for the post did not naturally continue. There had been a previous addition to our retinue, for on arrival a pet spy was attached to our person, whom I dubbed "Boots and Spurs," for he wore these trimmings night and day. Ostensibly he was for our protection, but caused us much inconvenience and loss of time through a bad habit he had of getting lost, and obliging us to wait for him. For he was under pain of death not to lose sight of us for a minute.

Both "Boots and Spurs" and the interpreter attended our round of diplomatic visits, but became frantic with alarm and curiosity when the whole conversation with the Persian

Minister was conducted in French, which this diplomat spoke extremely well.

. . . . .

From the Persian Legation, we passed on to the Turkish. As we drew up before the door, the major-domo became violently excited at the sight of our cameras and refused to admit us to the house. He probably suspected that the innocent looking boxes and tripods were machine guns disguised for the undoing of the protectors of the Armenians and Greeks. In vain "Boots and Spurs" cooed in his softest way,—in vain did the interpreter make his unintelligible sounds,—"Abdul the Bull-bull" was adamant and we finally retired crestfallen, leaving our cards, which he received gingerly and scrutinized suspiciously as we drove sadly away.

Following this rebuff, we retired to the rest house for lunch and spent the afternoon on the hills surrounding Kabul, taking pictures of the helpless and non-resisting landscape. Kabul, from above, presents a mixed picture. Progress was represented by the long, low, ugly buildings of the munition factory and

woolen mills; tradition by the rest of the town, a mixture of mud huts and palaces. Some quarters seemed to have just been completed; others were in ruins as though they had been recently bombarded. I discovered that this was because no one wasted time or energy pulling down the ordinary dwellings; when their condition became too dilapidated to live in the inmates moved and built again in another portion of the town. Time and weather completed the wrecking of the abandoned house, and when they were quite levelled out, the spot once more became a desirable building lot. Here and there the domes of the tombs of past Amirs loomed above the neighboring houses, and the whole town was girdled by portions of a broken down wall, so old that no one in Kabul knew who built it.

That night, after dinner, Mr. V. der L. told us some of his experiences. Explorer, prospector, mining engineer,—what and where hadn't he been. He told us tales of the Yukon and Klondike: differences with local sheriffs, when a man had to move, and move quick—and far,—how his partner broke trail and carried his pack for him till he fell exhausted,

himself then going on alone. In contrast, he had prospected and sought concessions in Siam —had shown the King of Siam how to run the first moving picture machine someone had sent him. Then he swung north again with stories among the wild natives of Siberia; a winter wasted there after fishing, lumber, and possible oil concessions,—living in the same huts with the natives, who, when they had speared a seal, didn't bother to cook it,—simply split it open and tore the heart and liver out with their teeth. Suddenly he swung back to the Philippines on a treasure hunt:—long days of marching through hostile jungle, to a little town where his pal had hidden treasure, in a well, during the insurrection;—locating the place, only to discover that the local priest had found and removed the loot,—which was mostly church paraphernalia, the very day before he arrived.

As we got to know him better, he told us about his latest exploits in Russia:—how curious the British were about his concessions, and the time he returned to his room suddenly, while they were searching his luggage for the documents.

"I had to laugh, boys,—there they were looking as guilty as terriers in a chicken yard, and all the time the papers they wanted were hanging down the back of my neck by a string."

We were so engrossed in V. der L.'s stories that we didn't notice a rumbling going on outside the door till I spoke:—

"That was a pretty good-sized truck that went by just now."

V. der L. listened and just then another went by.

"Yes, that must be quite a heavy— By gad boys, there are no trucks up here, come out quick, it's another earthquake."

"Boots and Spurs" joined us, full of polite concern. "Please excuse," he kept repeating, smiling apologetically; so we magnanimously decided to overlook it for once. As a matter of fact, we had to put up with a repetition almost every night of our visit.

The next day began with the usual visit to the Foreign Office,* but we fled thence in hor-

* This branch of the service also had a monopoly on all transactions in foreign exchange in Kabul, and could therefore peg it at a most favorable rate—for themselves.

ror at the first "perhaps." From there we went to the bazaar, a truly marvellous place; long-winding streets shaded by canvas awnings, mules, sheep and camels mingled fraternally with the crowd. Each merchant sat on a raised daïs, whence he bargained with prospective customers. Underneath, in little dug-outs, were cobblers and shoemakers and others following the baser callings. The business carried on by these latter was often done through the outstretched legs of buyers dealing with the stall above. The bazaar was divided, by immemorial custom, among the various guilds or occupations,—the brassworkers, the tent-makers, the salt dealers, the sweetmeat vendors, the dispensers of cooling sherbet, while everywhere were to be seen itinerant pipe boys. These bore all the ingredients necessary for smoking, in a box strapped around their waist. At a signal from a passer-by, a hubble-bubble which the boy sucked at occasionally to keep going, was handed up, and the purchaser, against a payment (it seemed to be one pie,—equal to about one-sixth of a cent) was entitled to a half dozen full puffs.

Soon the crowd grew so dense, attracted by

the sight of foreigners and the cameras, that it became impossible to take any more pictures and we were compelled to leave.

Back to the rest house for luncheon and a smoke. And then once more on the road, this time to the summer palace of the old Amir on the outskirts of Kabul. Arriving at the entrance, we began a slow climb to the eminence on which the palace is situated, the rise being about 500 feet in a quarter of a mile. The structure is situated on a gravelled terrace and surrounded by luxuriant fruit trees, apples, plums, cherries and a variety of others. The dignified and attractive exterior, with broad sweeping verandahs, rather led us to expect that the interior would reveal much of interest, but we were greatly disappointed. Entering into a dilapidated hallway, we were next ushered into what was evidently the main living room. This was occupied and almost blocked up by a huge billiard table and an equally imposing ping-pong table. The remaining space was filled with garish furniture, upholstered in red velvet, while the floor covering was an Axminster carpet of weird and fearful pattern. Obeying an old habit, I

picked up a tipless cue and drove one ball; the sphere struck a ridge in the centre of the table and bounced back. Not caring for this boomerang sport, I sadly laid down my cue and followed the guide through the adjoining rooms. These were the same monuments of bad taste and inappropriate furnishings. Even the piano jarred our sense of harmony, being shockingly out of tune.

But soon we grew tired of the endless suites of rooms exhibiting nothing of charm or interest, and left the palace to go to the tomb of Babur, that interesting and romantic figure of Moghul history, founder of the dynasty in India, and the grandfather of Akbar.

The tomb, following the older Mohammedan custom, is open to the sky; simple in itself but magnificent in its setting, situated on a flower-carpeted sloping hillside, which falls slowly down to the main road.

The sun was sinking behind the western hills when we again came in sight of the rest house. After only a few days there, it already began to mean home to us, so domestic is man, and it was with a sense of relief and relaxation that

we sat down with Washington B. to the usual meal of pilau and pilau and pilau.

We had begun to count that the day that did not see us at the Foreign Office was lost. This day the fates smiled on us; "Allah" was good, and Mohammed was his prophet. "Perhaps" met us, be-spectacled and grinning, and assured us that the Amir himself would receive us on Friday morning, honest to goodness and no mistake. He further suggested that meanwhile it would be in order to proceed to the summer palace of his august master, lying some twenty-one miles nor' nor' east of Kabul, on a slight eminence, overlooking the valley in which the capital is built, there to photograph the new town springing up, as well as the palace gardens.

I countered this proposition by suggesting that "Perhaps" should produce the petrol which had been promised me daily from the time of our arrival. I also had the audacity to suggest that I could not see the use of wasting petrol for an additional trip, when all the necessary pictures could be taken on the day on which his Majesty planned to receive us. "Perhaps" was profuse in his explanations,

and apologized about the petrol, but seemed astonished that a mere matter of a little gasoline should keep us from wanting to visit as often as possible so notable a spot as the house of his Gracious Sovereign. But as he was somewhat dubious as to his power, without the aid of a Genii, genus Standard Oil, to produce the extra gas needed, and had already shown himself fruitful only in promises, he at last came around to my way of thinking. Thomas appeared at this point to be slightly peeved at my insistence, but I explained to him, he not being a sailor-man, that we had just enough gas to get us out of the country, and cocking up my furry ears, and planting all four feet firmly, I refused to budge from my position.

In the meantime, great things had been arranged for us for that afternoon—a review of two divisions of troops and a garden party at the Foreign Minister's, both to begin at the same time and both for our express benefit. The arrangers either gifted us with the quality of ubiquity, or were trying to outdo the late P. T. Barnum. With regard to the review, Thomas had told the authorities that it would not be possible to take pictures after six

o'clock, but once ordered, nothing could alter their plans. In the meantime, we retired to the rest house, and Thomas went off to again visit the bazaar, while I worked on the car until luncheon.

At three, we went to visit the museum; yes, there really was one. This was housed in a rather stately building, the architecture showing Moorish influence, set in a large garden and with a large tank at the back. Unfortunately, repairs were going on, so the curator was somewhat coy in showing his collection, which he assured us had been packed away in a box. Museums and galleries must be the flimsiest structures in the world, since one can never enter one when repairs and changes are not going on in some portion.

I afterwards learned from Monsieur Foucher, the charming French archaeologist, then residing in Kabul, that we had not missed much, and that the curator's statement as to *a* box was not exaggerated.

On our way back, we called at the British Legation, and received a cordial reception. Here we remained until it was time to move on to the garden party, after having promised to

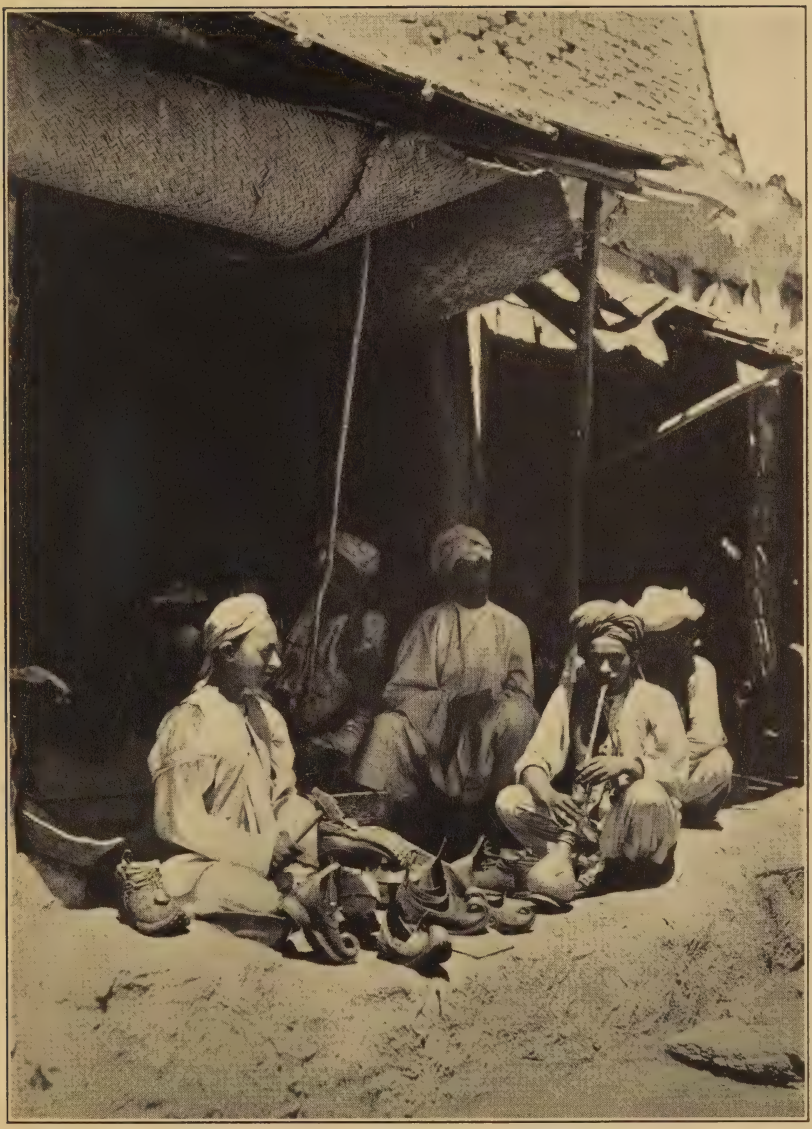
dine at the Legation the same evening. At the garden party we found all the world without a wife, barring the Bolsheviks. These latter females were rather pathetic figures, for their garments were sadly out of repair and seemed to be the fragments of the finery of various past generations. During the afternoon, I was formally presented to the British Minister; both of us had sat up at poker games, so we bowed coolly and distantly with never a suggestion in our manner of a previous acquaintance. At this point, the Italian Minister was observed tearing around in a state of wild excitement. In the course of his gyrations, he came near me, and I heard him say:—

"Have you heard—have you heard?—they are going to take our pictures for the cinematograph; come quickly, we must all get in;"—and seizing an inoffensive and pathetic looking Bolshevik female by the hand, he dragged her to the spot which he seemed to think would be the exact focus of the camera. Great was his disappointment to learn that only still pictures would be taken, and would have been still greater had he known that the picture really desired was that of the Turkish Minister. This

man had played a conspicuous part in the military history of his country during the war, having defended Medina with conspicuous gallantry and ability when attacked in overwhelming numbers by Arabs and French.

From the garden party we rushed away in the face of many protestations to attend the review, where a chorus of reverse protestations greeted us for having arrived *so* late. The military seemed surprised and hurt when informed that it was out of the question to try and take pictures at seven o'clock in the evening, as they had previously been told. However, the review followed its course, and Thomas was told that as a special favor it would be repeated the next morning at eight o'clock.

An Afghan review is not greatly unlike other reviews. The program consisted of trick-riding, tent-pegging and sabre-fencing by cavalry, who by the way were a magnificent body of men, superbly mounted and trained by Turkish officers,—then a march past by the infantry and artillery. The manoeuvring and marching of the troops was quite up to the standard of European armies, but one could



A cobbler's stall in Kabul

Ameer Amanullah at the wheel of his Rolls-Royce

imagine certain difficulties in furnishing ammunition to these troops, since they carried British rifles, Mausers, Martini-Henris, and Schneiders. The review finished, we returned to dress and thence to the British Legation for dinner. Half way there, we suddenly remembered "Boots and Spurs," so had to return, wake him, and start once more.

The next morning, we were up early to attend the promised review. On arrival, we found the troops drawn up with their backs to the sun—an impossible position from a photographer's point of view. The officer commanding told Thomas that he (Thomas) was to order the troops about as best suited his purposes. Thomas had never been a soldier, and some of his orders, accompanied by a wave of the hand, being found in no manual of tactics, were warranted to throw confusion into the Prussian Guards. The Afghan troops, however, refused to be stampeded; and, after milling for some time, it was discovered, when the dust had cleared away, that they were on the opposite side of the field. Chase began to take pictures of the cavalry stunts. Unfortunately, this took so much time that the

changed position of the sun made it necessary to again bring about a volte-face en masse of the troops. I myself have been the innocent victim when generals reviewed troops, and though I knew no Pushtu, had no difficulty in determining what the troops were saying, as they were hustled about in a chase after the sun. Luckily discipline is good in the Afghan army and we left the field without being fired at.

The most impressive thing of the whole review was the cavalry band. Not because of their uniforms or music, but the fact that they played at a sharp trot:—

"It was jerky, spasmodic, and harsh I'm aware,"
"But still it distinctly suggested an air."

Not only that, but the air was familiar, and I wept with mirth as I suddenly recognized an abortive rendering of "The Wearing of the Green."

. . . . .

Friday, August 5th, finally arrived, and lest the reader has been confused by the intricacies of Afghan diplomacy, it should be pointed out that this was the date fixed for the audience

with His Majesty the Amir. But even for this, the laws of the Medes and the Afghans cannot be disregarded, and we began the day with a visit to the Foreign Office, which, through familiarity, had now become the least foreign thing in Kabul, to us.

The battle opened with a sharp attack on the enemy's centre, delivered on my part to obtain petrol, and I began to think it was indeed an auspicious day when I carried my objective, and within a paltry hour and a half, had obtained and poured into "Belinda's" tank eight gallons of this precious fluid, cash down, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged.

At 10:30 we were ready and got under way for Panakh, accompanied by "Boots and Spurs" and the hereditary interpreter.

The route to the summer palace is an agreeable one, through small villages and over easy mountain grades with lovely views from many points. Several times during the course of the drive, the road was blocked by bands of mountain tribesmen, who were on their way to visit His Majesty and to dance before him. At one point, "Belinda" was brought to a standstill, while two elephants, driven tandem, and

hauling a huge boiler, slowly passed. Finally we arrived at the gates of the village surrounding the palace and, after a terrific climb upwards, reached the rest house inside the gates. Half an hour was spent in driving around, taking pictures of the gardens, houses of various ministers under construction, views from the hill.

The day being Friday, the Mohammedan Sabbath, we were told that the Amir was just about to start for the Mosque. We started towards the gates of the palace, where we arrived just as a gaudy silver-painted car drew up, to wait for His Majesty. In a few minutes, His Majesty appeared walking through the grounds of the palace accompanied by his brother and one or two of his Ministers. The guard drawn up outside came to attention. Amanullah stepped jauntily into the car, took the steering-wheel and drove quickly down the hill. But though the car was of a well-known English make, and smeared with aluminum paint, there was an enormous leak in the radiator. This was amusing and also practical, for the car thus served as regal conveyance and humble sprinkler-cart at one and the same

time. The only drawback was that they had to carry a canvas bucket to fill up the radiator every five miles.

Meanwhile the moving-picture machine had been merrily grinding away, preserving this bit of contemporary history for future generations.

The first interview was very disappointing. It took place just inside the gates of the palace in the open air. After the usual flowery enquiries as to our health, His Majesty said that he would speak to me personally in French. Hélas! His Majesty's French was very much of the "Have you seen the green hat of my pink uncle in the garden" variety, and we were forced to fall back on the offices of Tewfik Bey, his Turkish interpreter, who spoke English and French extremely well. They then told us that we would be granted further interview at three o'clock for photographic purposes, so we retired for luncheon.

Alas; another disappointment. We were somewhat hungry and anticipated the oriental equivalent of a Lucullan banquet, but the nightingales' tongues and similar delicacies were too cleverly hidden in the usual *pilau* for

anyone but an analytical chemist to find them. While we were lunching, the tribesmen whom we had passed on the way up returned from the palace, having given their dance in front of the Amir. Thomas and Chase, the latter armed with camera, followed them down the road begging them to halt long enough to enable him to take some pictures. Unfortunately, they knew him not, and having received instructions from the Amir to return to Kabul, they stubbornly refused to recognize any higher authority in Afghanistan.

By this time, the hour of our appointment at the palace was drawing near, so once more we repaired to the royal precincts. On arriving at the gate of the palace grounds, we found a canvas curtain drawn across the gate-way and were told we would have to wait, as His Majesty was lunching with the ladies of the palace. We accordingly took our seats on a bench outside, and derived no small pleasure from the scenes which were being enacted before the gates. Small boys, in wierd costumes of tweed, emerged every few minutes from behind the curtain, bearing silver dishes and platters, while other minions bore to the guests

The King's servants brought out food in silver vessels

Ameer Amanullah's daughters. In attempting to Europeanize his country, Amanullah began on his own family

platters loaded with viands of various kinds, from the cook house which lies without the gates. It is simple to say they bore food to the guests behind the curtain—but this could not be done until certain formalities had been complied with. Some three or four would be lined up with their food-platters; a large sheet would be placed over them in such a way as to cover their heads and bodies down to the waist, and then led by a small boy the procession entered the grounds, looking for all the world like some neolithic monster or perhaps the two-man elephants seen in the pantomimes.

Finally, the curtain was drawn aside and we were summoned into the Presence. The women-folk had disappeared and the Amir greeted us on the terrace of one of the numerous small villas which make up the royal residence. He was dressed in a suit of loud-checked tweeds and wore a rakish panama hat. It was soon evident that this reception was not for the purpose of an interview, but merely to give to Thomas and Chase every opportunity of photographing His Highness in various poses and costumes. They took him alone, they took him with his brother, they took him with

his ministers and with his interpreters, little Tewfik Bey blushing with pleasure at the honor thus thrust upon him. Finally, the latest offspring of the Royal House was produced, which, at Thomas' earnest plea, the Amir held in his arms while the picture was taken. That finished, the still photographers and His Majesty retired to change for tennis, of which Thomas took moving pictures.

The play was interesting but not instructive, except perhaps from a negative point of view; it strongly suggested polo as played at Calcutta. I became rather bored, and in consequence unwittingly placed myself in a somewhat delicate position. One is not allowed to smoke in His Majesty's presence, so I strolled back toward the car for a whiff of 'baccy. Unfortunately my line of retreat had been cut off by a *purdah** party, but I only became aware of this when I heard feminine shrieks and roars from the guards. Immediately thoughts of various strange oriental punishments to which I was liable passed through my mind; Mazeppa tied to a horse's

* Purdah means veiled and that means a group of women from the harem who would ordinarily never be seen unveiled.

back; bow-strings, or being sewed in a sack. Fortunately the uproar was drowned by the noise going on on the tennis court; the only person who had heard it was good old "Boots and Spurs," who promptly charged to my rescue, and under cover of this counter attack by cavalry I made good my escape, ignobly leaving "Boots and Spurs" to his fate. Some time later Thomas and Chase appeared with one of the Foreign Office ministers in tow. Our own interpreter had returned to Kabul on his own, as he could not stomach the sight of Tewfik Bey, who had supplanted him in His Majesty's favor.

The ex-favorite had borrowed the horse of the Foreign Minister for his return journey, so the latter accompanied us to the city in the car. His Excellency had been twitting me on the slowness of a motor-car:—

"How long did it take you to come out?"

"One hour and twenty minutes, thanks to mules, elephants and other impediments strewn across the road at inconvenient intervals."

"An hour and twenty minutes! Why, I can

do it in an hour and ten minutes on horseback."

I said nothing, but it was evident by the way "Belinda" snorted that she had taken it to the heart of all of her six cylinders. After we had stopped to allow him to recover his automatic pistol, which he had left with a friend at the last week-end party (no Foreign Minister is complete without a Mauser automatic), we continued on our way. He sat beside me, and the road being more or less clear, the journey was punctuated with the following exclamations: "Not so fast, the bend is dangerous;" "My God, certainly you shall kill him;" "Less speed I beseech you." Then we struck a dust-storm and his gramophone choked. On running out of it, we overtook the interpreter who had left some three hours ahead of us, and His Excellency hastily arranged an exchange of steeds.

That night we had a farewell dinner at the British Legation, and retired in good time in anticipation of the next day, for not only was it the date of our departure, but also the anniversary of the declaration of Afghan independence.

"Boots and Saddles" were sounded about eight o'clock, and "Boots and Spurs" appeared in answer to the summons. I had overhauled "Belinda" hastily the night before, and when I started the engine in motion it was running like a well-regulated clock. All luggage was got ready to be placed on the car as soon as we should return from the procession, which was to be held that day to mark the beginning of the festival known as "Id-ul Fetur." The program was somewhat as follows:—

At nine o'clock His Majesty was to leave the town palace and ride, preceded and followed by troops, to the Mosque. At eleven o'clock a reception was to be given to all Foreign Ministers and at twelve o'clock Mr. Lowell Thomas and party were to leave in peace according to his word.

So much for the program. Our part in it was thusly:— At 8:30 we presented ourselves at the Foreign Office, according to plan, in order to pick up the guide, philosopher and friend. At nine, we left without him, as he failed to make an appearance. We found our way to the entrance of the palace, and from

this point of vantage photographed the troops on the march to the Mosque. The crack regiments were in full dress, consisting of red coat and black trousers and black astrakhan fezzes for the infantry, while the cavalry wore powder blue, with red or yellow lancer plastrons and a sort of hussar busby or shako, with red or yellow glands hanging from the centre over one side. Finally, His Majesty appeared superbly mounted and wearing a uniform much resembling that of a British Field Marshal, except for the head covering, which strongly resembled that of the Rifle Brigade. He and his suite swept by, most of his immediate attendants being clothed somewhat like himself. Gathering up Thomas and Chase and the apparatus into the car, I threaded my way through the dense crowd to the Mosque. "Boots and Spurs" directed us to a raised pavilion reserved for Ministers, and much to our horror a determined gentleman at the gate demanded entrance fee of two rupees per head. Not to be outdone in oriental politeness, I bowed vacantly, pointed in the direction of "Boots and Spurs" and marched up the stairs. But it was no use. After a slight altercation with "Boots

and Spurs," the gatekeeper followed me up, and finally when convinced that I had but three rupees on my person, accepted these in full settlement for the three of us. Meantime, Thomas had disappeared inside the Mosque where the service was going on, so I followed after him. All three of us had borrowed astrakhan fezzes the night before, and we were so sunburned that by merely donning this local headgear, we passed for Young Turks. By this simple disguise, we not only reduced the risk of being attacked by a fanatic, but also by watching and imitating Naim-Shah's method of praying, were able to enter the Mosque and secretly take pictures.

I have rarely seen a more impressive sight. Imagine an enormous field, with here and there a cherry or peach tree. The whole enclosed by white walls and at one end a raised platform, with Moorish arched niches at the back along the wall. Here the Mullahs stood and exhorted the faithful in powerful ringing voices.

In front, arranged in orderly rows, were some two or three thousand devout Mussulmans.

"Allah il Allah, Mohammed razoule,"

chanted the Mullahs, and the response of the thousands was like the booming of breakers on a beach after a storm.

They stood, knelt and prostrated themselves in unison, till one could feel the thrill of fanatical fervor run through the crowd like an electric current.

Nevertheless, I left with a feeling of relief, for I couldn't help imagining the scene if those stark fanatics should discover our presence in the Mosque. Three infidels, but worse still, infidels with cameras. An invention of the devil, which the more ignorant Mohammedans believe capable of stealing their souls. Yes! the air was certainly better in the street outside.

We made a move to the car, but the question of getting away was difficult, as the mob had flowed into the square and completely filled it, while the exit was blocked by columns of troops. To add to the general jam, the hillmen who had danced before the Amir a few days ago, were giving a show in the square. Over a hundred of them formed a huge circle and the nose of the man behind was so close that it almost touched the head of the one in

front. Every dancer held a long curved *Tulwar* in each hand (making in all two hundred blades). They began to chant and move slowly round, twirling the sabres over their heads like Indian clubs. The chanting became quicker, punctuated by the drums in the centre, and the dancers increased their pace and tossed their heads from side to side. Soon the swords were flashing over their heads at a terrible pace, and their bobbed hair flung out from their heads like pin-wheels.

In the middle of this circle two clowns made horse play. A misshapen dwarf, with a lathe sword, chased another clown, who pranced round riding a sort of carnival hobby-horse shaped like an ostrich. It was made of light wicker work and his body was passed through the middle, so that his own legs seemed to belong to the bird. The dance stopped suddenly, on one note of the chant, and the circle broke up. I strained my eyes, but could not spot a single dancer who had even been scratched. The mob thinned out and "Belinda" pushed slowly forward, nosing her way through the crowd.

When we reached the palace where the offi-

cial ceremony was being held, Thomas and Chase went in; I was told that I could probably gain an entrance also if I picked up a camera and made a noise like an assistant. As I had already seen a levée in India, the splendours of royalty began to pall on me, so I lent my fez to Mr. V. der L. and let him take my place on the spare camera.

The party broke up about twelve, and the three of us went back to the rest house to load up the car, having planned to get away at 12:30 sharp. "Put not your trust in princes, neither pin your faith to Amirs." We had hardly arrived before an emissary summoned us to the palace to take further pictures of His Majesty. Not considering myself included in the summons, I suggested to the others that they take a "tum tum," which is a two-wheeled Government cart, and leave me to supervise the loading up of the willing Buick. They did not reappear until 1:30, and after a hurried luncheon and the bestowing of the necessary baksheesh on servants, guards and other menials, we prepared to depart. The question arose then as to how we should remunerate "Boots and Spurs." He was above accepting

A small fortress overlooking one of the palaces on the outskirts of Kabul. Sharpshooters are at the loopholes constantly

The garden on the oasis of Jelalahbad, where we spent the last night

money, we thought, and besides we had none, so Thomas finally presented him with a watch. The glass was broken, one hand was missing, and it was suffering from internal paralysis, but the nickel plating was still a thing of beauty, and we thought "Boots and Spurs" was going to accompany us to Peshawar by way of showing his gratitude.

Finally, we got off and with a sign of relief I crossed the crazy drawbridge for the last time.

Chapter Three

AND BACK AGAIN

All went well for the first twenty miles, when we stopped at a wayside stream to fill up with cold water before tackling the first climb. In a moment of misdirected enthusiasm, Naim-Shah poured a bucket of water, not only over the radiator, but into the bonnet of the Buick—"to make it good and cool," as he explained. The result was that the magneto was flooded and there must have been two inches of water in the crank case. The car naturally resented this treatment and refused to move, but after baling her out and baking the magneto in the sun, she started off without a whimper. It seemed almost impossible to put "Belinda" out of action for long.

Due to this setback and two punctures, nightfall found us fifty-four miles from Kabul and about the same distance from Nimloh, on a dangerous mountain road. We pushed on for another ten miles, feeling our way with

headlight and spotlight. Thomas suggested extinguishing the lights, and was perfectly right, for we were a target for all night marauders. But I pointed out that it was better to risk a few stray bullets than court certain death over a precipice running without them. Our luck held, however, and we reached Dinjilling about ten.

Everyone was in bed and asleep except the dogs, and the noise of our engine drew a horde of these savage brutes round us. Personally, I felt no imperative urge to descend amongst them, but their snarling and barking did us a good turn, for it roused the villagers.

A few words from Naim-Shah and one of them clambered on to the running-board to guide us to the rest house.

We came to a narrow track, which seemed to run straight up the cliff in front of us. I had a moment's anxiety wondering if there would be room to turn once we got up, but by that time I was so tired that I would have driven up a flagpole if I thought there was a bed at the top.

Our guide was right, however, and we drove

into the spacious compound of a well-appointed bungalow.

Again we fell asleep while waiting for food to be prepared—awoke, partook of it and stumbled back to bed. I am still convinced we ate in our sleep.

The next morning we got away bright and early, but had so many punctures and blow-outs we didn't reach Jelalahbad till noon. Then I, as transportation officer, had a bit of an argument with Thomas, for I decided it would be better to spend that night at Jelalahbad. We still had the worst part of the road to cover, and as the Khyber-pass is closed to all travellers after 4 P. M., I was somewhat doubtful of arriving in time to enter it. This might prove serious, for there was no other rest house between Jelalahbad and the frontier, and last but not least, I had used up all my spare tubes, and wanted time and a cool place to patch the punctured ones. No patch would stay on if cemented during the heat of the day. In reward for this prudence, I spent about as uncomfortable a night as I have experienced. I was just dropping off to sleep when I felt something moving inside my pillow. Instantly

I was sitting up wide awake. There could only be one solution; someone,—an enemy of the Amir and hater of infidels—had put a khrait (deadly viper) in my bed. I whispered my suspicion to Thomas, who instantly agreed, as his pillow had also moved and he was on the point of telling me when I spoke. We both rose hastily, and formed a line of campaign. Thomas was to seize the pillow by the closed end and shake it; in the meantime, I, armed with a stick and an electric torch, was to first whack the pillow, and then anything that came out.

The plan worked like clock-work. Thomas grabbed and shook, and almost simultaneously I smote. Here the original idea fell down, both of us being too convulsed with laughter to go on, for across the verandah floor scuttled a very frightened mouse followed by her terrified family.

The mosquitoes were ravenous, so after risking suffocation by trying to sleep under my sheet, I finally retired to an inner room in the rest house, while I snatched three hours of drugged, airless and vitiated slumber.

We started at five o'clock the next morning,

and drove along as hard as we could go, only stopping occasionally to take pictures. The only unpleasant incident was when we hit a bump so hard that Naim-Shah was bounced into the air and almost knocked unconscious by the wooden bow of the hood.

We did not stop at Dakka on the return journey, and in consequence were held up for a few minutes at the frontier post, but as it was only a hundred yards from British territory, we intimated that we intended to push on whether they liked it or not. They made the best of a bad job and graciously gave us permission to do so.

At the entrance to the Khyber we put down the hood of the car, as Thomas wished to take pictures on the way through the pass. As a result, on arriving at Landikhotal, where we stopped for a drink and to pump up tires, I had the beginning of a perfectly good heat stroke. We did the thirty-seven miles from the entrance of the Khyber to Peshawar in about thirty minutes, but to this day I don't know who drove the car over that last stretch. Thomas and Chase would not have been so happy if they had realized how I felt about it,

but luckily there was nothing on the road and "Belinda" pulled up before Dean's Hotel about 1:30. But even then the work was not finished, and it was after five before I had entrained "Belinda" and could tumble into bed.

We left the next morning by train, and two days later I was back in Calcutta, and Thomas and Chase were in Bombay.

For me the trip was over, but I discovered on the way down to Calcutta that I had one souvenir I had not bought or even bargained for—camel itch. This comes from being bitten by sand fleas or flies that have been near camel dung. Their bite leaves a hard core, which the harder one scratches the more they itch. It proved a delightful occupation during the tedious train journey. First I would scratch every bite raw, and then apply iodine. This treatment merely gave a pleasing tickling sensation, and it wasn't till I got to Delhi that I could obtain proper treatment and relief.

. . . . .

All things considered, the hillmen are grand men. When not openly hostile, they are courteous and willing to lend a hand. On two oc-

casions on our trip, while changing tires, they gathered round to help, and while some of them insisted on helping pump, one went off and returned with a life-saving watermelon, which he gave me as a parting gift. It was not a question of baksheesh (tips). They would have been mortally offended if I had offered any; it was simply that they were in a friendly mood and wished to help in every possible way. Nevertheless, they are independent as hawks, and had the idea pleased them, would have shot us down and looted the car just for the fun of it; but they are real men. I was sorry to leave them and return to mealy-mouthed whining Bengal.

Chapter Four

VALE ESTA

THE years rolled by and at long last the time approached for my departure from India. Life hadn't been too pleasant there those last months, for my wife had gone home ahead of me and I was living with a man who had taken over the flat, furniture and all. He was a good sort, but the friend who came with him was not famous for his tact, nor did he exactly hate himself. The first night he arrived, he undertook to re-arrange all the furniture in the drawing room, as though *he* had bought the place. When he had finished, it looked exactly like a club smoking room: easy chairs placed two by two, with a small table between them, etc. That night, when I got back from work, the tactless one was more pleased with himself than ever, and fairly bubbling over with self-esteem as an inferior desecrator.

"There," he said; "isn't that much better

now—much more refined and homelike, what?"

He knew my wife had arranged the room before, but I still tried to be diplomatic. "Well, for a married couple, I prefer the way Di had it, but, of course, for two men living alone, it is probably better as you have arranged it." "It looks rather like a bar or a smoking room now."

The tactless one ignored the thin ice and crashed on:

"Well, I think it much better now, and I can assure you that *my* wife would infinitely prefer this arrangement."

I shrugged my shoulders and admitted that that was quite possible, and when he finally realized what I meant, the house was indeed divided against itself.

But there were other annoyances besides being a guest in my own house. The faithful Abdul, who had never left me from the time he had been in my service, suddenly fell ill, and I had to take on a temporary bearer. He was a slimy Hindu, and used to tease Judy through the slats of the shutters when I was away. One night, the man who lived above me caught

him at it, and after shaking him like a rat left a note to apologize for touching one of my servants. When I got back the bearer was full of righteous indignation, but after reading the note I repeated the dose and threatened him with worse if he did it again.

The next night I returned late from a bridge party. The bearer had gone to bed, but I was somewhat mollified to see the pains he had taken to lay out my slippers just in front of my chair, a thing he had never done before. I was in a dreamy, self-contented mood as I undressed, but as I slipped my right foot into the slipper, an electric thrill went through me: something soft and furry had moved under my instep. I knew instinctively what it was, and realizing it would be hopeless to withdraw my foot in time, stamped heavily on the floor, crushing the occupant. When I shook the slipper, just as I had suspected, a perfectly good tarantula fell out, but like all good tarantulas, it was dead.

I said nothing about this, for after all it might have been a coincidence, though I thought I discerned a disappointed look on the bearer's face.

The next day, on coming back from office, I went into the bathroom to sluice my face down in the wash basin. Once more I was touched by the bearer's thoughtfulness, for the water was drawn and waiting for me in the cool, darkened room. I was about to scoop the water up with my hands when I noticed a long, dark line at the bottom of the basin. Turning on the light I discovered an enormous centipede in the water. These brutes leave a sting which takes months to get over, and a queer thing about them is that they are almost amphibious, for it takes hours to drown them. This also might have been a coincidence, but two such instances in two days were enough, and not wishing to find a *khrait* in my bed the next night, I fired my naturalist bearer on the spot.

Finally came the night of the usual farewell dinner, and the next day Judy, Abdul and I departed for Bombay. Judy contributed to the general confusion by suddenly showing signs of having contracted a case of imminent puppies. I took Abdul to task for not watching her more carefully, till the latter pointed out that it had happened while he was sick. Nevertheless, Abdul was duly depressed at the

idea of his beloved Judy having puppies at sea.

At Bombay there were more farewell parties, but finally one morning I went aboard the good ship "Pilsner." Some friends and I repaired to the smoking room to sample the ship's beer of the same name, and Abdul rendered his last services arranging my belongings in my cabin. This done, he appeared at the smoking room door and I went out to say good bye.

"Sub tikh hai Sahib"—(everything all right, Sahib). Then he hesitated lost in some complicated calculation he was working out on his fingers. He finished and looked up with a relieved smile:

"Everything all right—Judy Miss Sahib too. Sahib get home before puppy."

We shook hands, and then with a mysterious smile, half sad, half relieved, Abdul salaamed and departed.

I started towards my cabin musing. Just who, and what was Abdul. Why had he taken service work with me? He had repulsed several good offers when people knew I was going home, yet he had implored me to let him know if I came East again, and had accepted the

usual half year's pay. I opened my cabin door, and as Abdul had said, everything was there. Very much everything, in fact, for on the neatly piled baggage was my folding rubber bath, travelling icebox and hurricane camp lantern, all of which I had given to a friend at Bombay before leaving. Abdul had played the faithful steward to the end.

There were one or two sympathetic people on board, including a Commissioner of the Punjaub Police. There were also some strange people from the Indian Educational Service. Most people connected with this branch of the service seem to be either dreary or dreadful. These were both, and had a flock of equally dreary children, over whom, being educationalists, they naturally had no control. The brats spent their days climbing up the rail and leaning far out board, just in front of my chair. I used to wonder what my reaction would be if one of them fell overboard. Would I spring valiantly after it, in a more or less hopeless attempt to save it from an infinitely more dreary life and death, or would I suddenly have pressing business below? I never entirely unravelled this Gordian-knot, but

after an hour's musing and apprehensive watching, used to compromise by shifting to the other side of the ship.

The policeman Mac P. was full of tales of riots, rebellions and plain scraps. By the time the ship reached Port Said, he had the male portion of his acquaintances worked up to such a bellicose state that they went ashore fairly looking for trouble. What the trouble-hunters didn't realize, was the fact that a change had come over the land of Egypt. Due to the recent political murders, and the seeming inability on the part of the British to handle the situation, the Gypies had become arrogant and intolerable. In spite of this change, the landing party drew blank till a mixed party of them was seated on the terrace of a café. Then all unbidden, trouble sought them out in the shape of a smutty post-card peddler. He was the usual type: six-foot by three feet of oily smiling cheek. We told him we did not want his wares or his company, but this only seemed to spur him on to further efforts. He displayed lewder and lewder pornographic cards in the hopes that if the men would not buy them, they would at least bribe

him to move on. The women protested and the men grew rude. At this moment he had edged his way round the table to where I was seated. I aired my small knowledge of Arabic, profane if not prolific, and he responded in kind.

When the Gypy produced the East's classic insult to the west—"You are English gentleman, I am Egyptian gentleman; you have one wife, I have two," I smote him. Now, just before I got to my feet to swot the Gyp, the policeman Mac P. had warned me to be careful of the local police, so when I struck I did so with due forethought and cunning. From ten yards it looked like a mere cuff on the face, for I kept my hand open. Actually it was a vicious swing to the side of the jaw with the heel of my hand. The Gyp grunted and staggered, and then to my surprise, instead of hitting back, howled for the police and justice. I got another surprise when the police not only came, but arrested me.

Then Mac P., the Junjab policeman, came into action. Up to this time, in spite of his yarns on board ship, he had taken no part in the rumpus, probably frightened, as an official, of compromising himself. Now, however,

he saved the day. First, he insisted on the native policeman sending for a Bimbashi (police officer). When the latter (also an Egyptian, but of the better class) came, Mac P. explained what a nuisance the peddler had been, and how he had insulted everyone in the party.

The Bimbashi, however, was also bitten by the new bug of Egyptian nationalism. He pretended that the peddler had a perfect right to hawk his wares, and if any damn Britisher should interfere with him, an Egyptian, they could take the consequences.

Then Mac P. changed his tone:

"All right, Bimbashi, go ahead and arrest him. Hold him up till he misses his boat, or comes across with baksheesh, but I warn you, it will get you into trouble. He isn't a British subject, but an American. What's more, he will call on his Consul, and it won't do your sacred cause of nationalism any good to get mixed up with Washington on account of this man. I know who he is if you don't, and he swings something wicked in the way of influence, with his own State Department—(Mac P. was lieing as fast as a horse could run by

this time), but go ahead and arrest him—it's not my funeral.

The Bimbashi hesitated. There was something menacing in Mac P.'s threats, and he didn't quite know what sacred custom he might be violating. Then the peddler, seeing his chance of bribe disappearing, tripped over his own feet. He heaped curses and insults on me and the rest of the party, finishing up with a naïve invitation to me personally to come up a side street and fight it out amongst *his* friends.

Here was something the Bimbashi knew something all about and could deal with promptly to vindicate his previous perplexity. A brief order to the policeman and the peddler was led off, cursing and swearing; the Bimbashi rode on, and the landing party retired to their boats on the shore.

But our troubles were not over yet. Half way out to the steamer, the brigand running the motor boat stopped the engine and demanded twice the sum agreed upon, to continue the journey—cash down. Mac P. turned to me:

"Can you run that engine?"

"Yes!"

"All right—I'll go aft and reason with Captain Kid."

Picking up his loaded walking-stick, he crawled past the other passengers till he was within striking distance of the boatman. Now then Charlie Peace (famous English burglar and cut-throat), just let me tell you we are no longer on Egyptian territory and once on board that steamer we will be on Italian ground—Sabe?"

"Yes, but you not there yet, bloody Britisher."

"No, but if you don't lay us alongside 'ekdum,' I'll crack you over the head and the other Sahib will run the boat."

The little pirate plot ended there and then, and we all trooped aboard, thankful to get quit of Port Said.

. . . . .

By prearranged plan my wife was to come out and meet me in a gondola when the ship got to Venice. The ship was half unloaded, however, by the time she got out to it, and the passengers' ladder some four feet from the water.

In consequence, I had to descend by a sea-ladder. This is simple enough under ordinary circumstances, but if one has to carry a fat bull-terrier under one arm, it becomes quite exciting. The gondola looked like a small black toothpick, and Judy felt like a white elephant, in spite of the fact that she did her best to help by pushing outward from the side of the ship. I put up a wee bit prayer to Allah, and my wife chortled with mirth. But though handicapped by the dog and a recently acquired full beard, I reached the gondola. My wife approved of my tonsorial efforts to please, but was not as amused at Judy's accomplishment.

. . . . .

The man at the Wagon-Lits office was quite affable about having a dog in the compartment, as long as it was only a lap-dog. The same cannot be said for the sleeping-car porter.

"Signore, you cannot have that dog in the compartment with you."

"Why not? The man at the bureau said one could take a lap-dog."

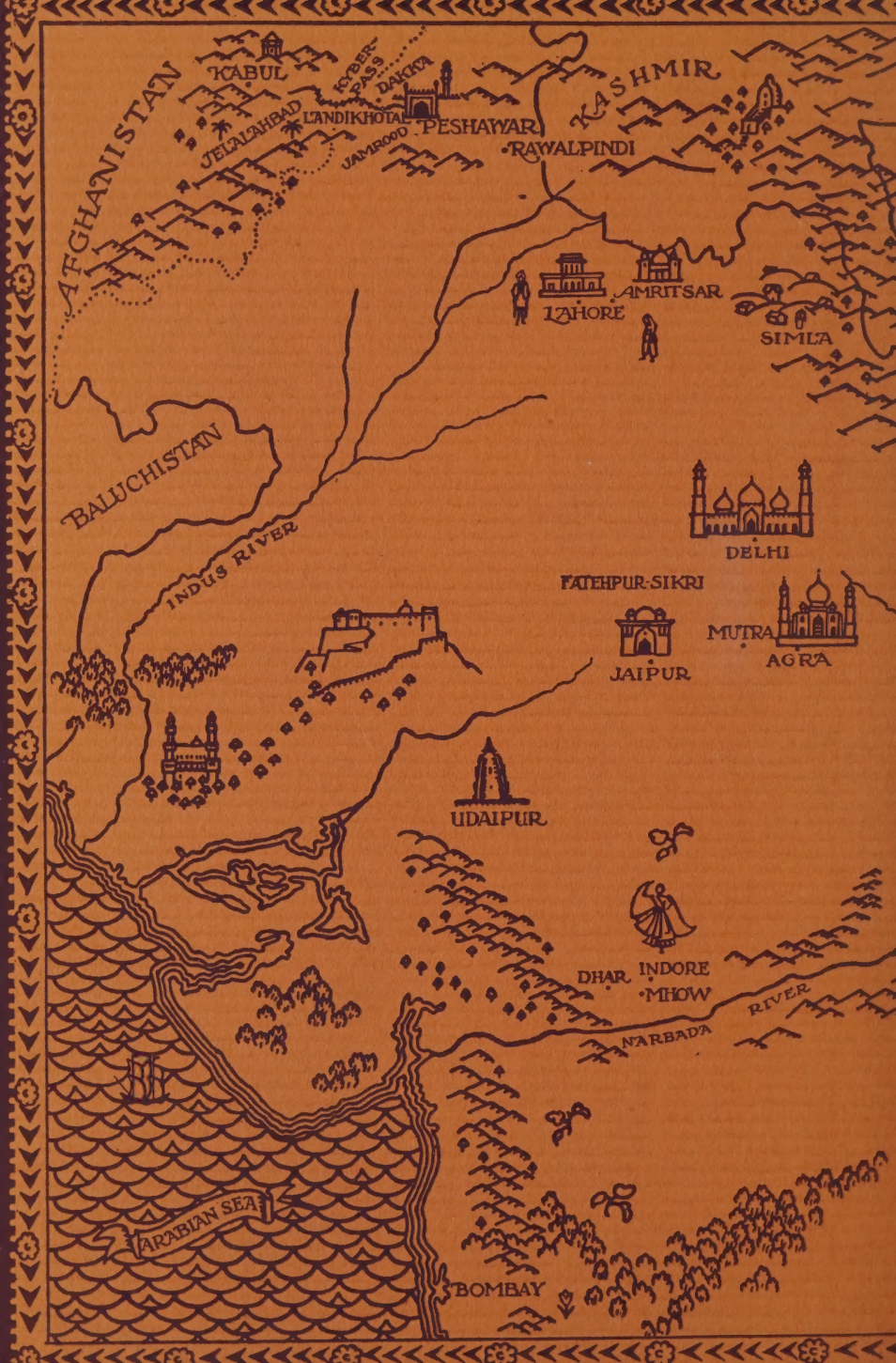
"That is hardly a lap-dog."

"Isn't she? Watch. Hup, Judy. There you are, you see she is a lap-dog!"

Judy had complied without the slightest hesitation and leapt on my knees. What more, she dared the conductor to come near her, proving that she was also a watch-dog. Not wishing to carry the experiment to the point of discovering whether she was a wrist watch-dog, the porter retired disgruntled.

The train sped on. Judy moaned a bit, but there were no extra fares to pay. Finally we reached Paris, and I hove a sigh of relief.

Abdul was right, but only just right, for the next day Judy produced seven mongrel offsprings. We beat the pups to Paris by twenty-four hours.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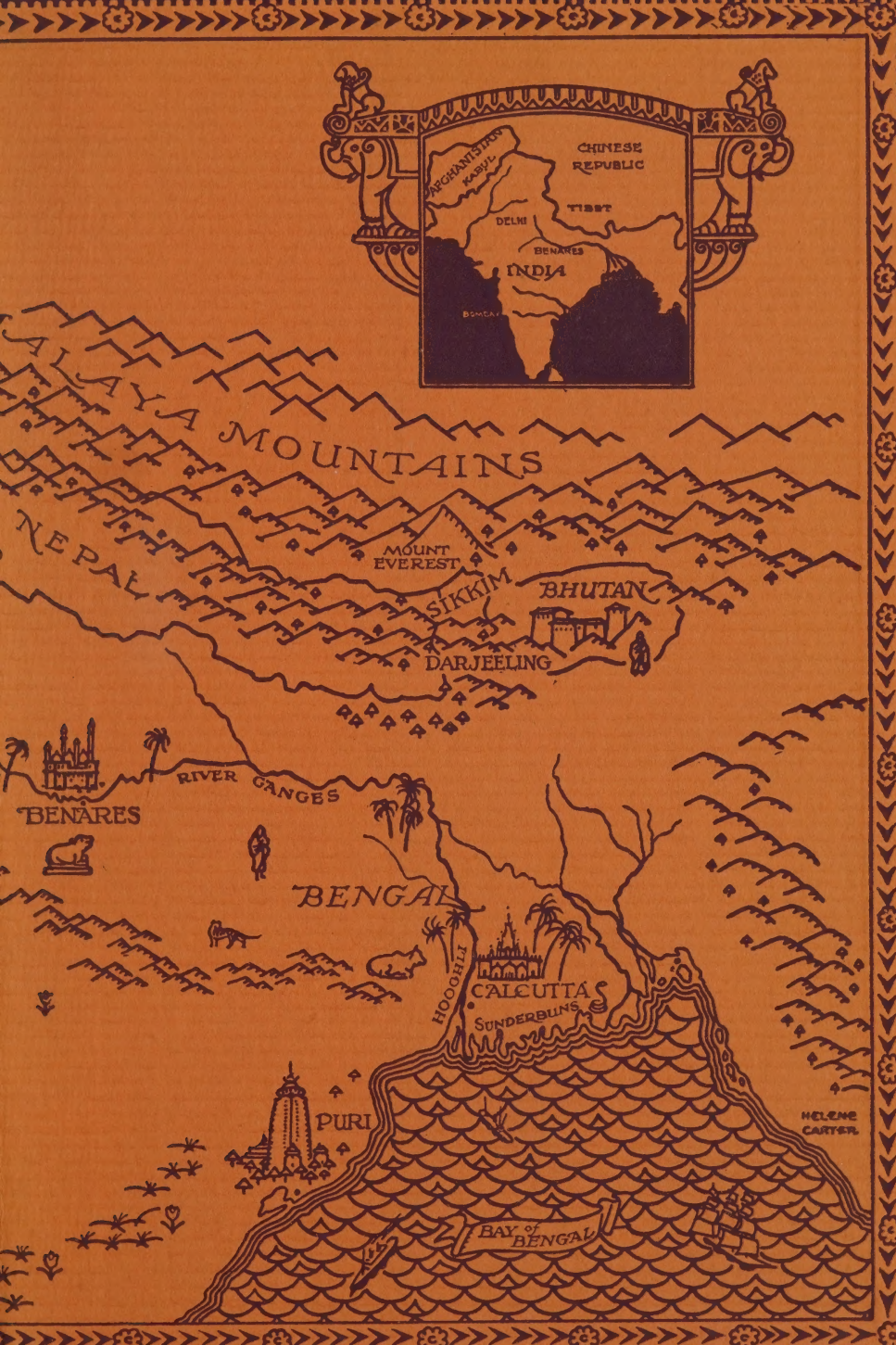
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